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William J. McGillivray

TUGBOATS AND BOATMEN OF CALIFORNIA
1906 - 1970

With Comments and Additions by
William Figari

An Interview Conducted by
Ruth Teiser

Copy Number ___

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William McGillivray (left) and William Figari (right) being interviewed, January 17, 1969.

Photograph by Catherine Harroun

January 17, 1991

William McCullaray (left) and William Bright (right) being interviewed, Samaritan Center by photographer Charmaine Harrison

Photograph

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PREFACE

San Francisco Bay Maritime History Series

The following interview is one of a series of tape-recorded recollections devoted to the history of San Francisco Bay in the first half of the twentieth century. This was an especially colorful, active period of momentous technological and sociological change in American maritime affairs, and San Francisco Bay reflected the period well. For the economic historian, the reminiscences illustrate the changes in San Francisco Bay that took place in response to worldwide maritime conditions and to changes in California; for the maritime buff, they are full of the bustle, color and variegated characters of a lively shipping port serving deep-water, coastwise, and river and bay traffic.

Thanks are extended to the Crowley Launch and Tug Company for permission to research in their extensive scrapbook collection and for the help and advice given by members of the firm over the years that the series has been in progress. Our gratitude also to the staff of the San Francisco Maritime Museum for the use of their historical documentation and for their help in checking out names, dates, and facts.

The Regional Oral History Office was established to tape record autobiographical interviews with persons prominent in the history of California and the West. The Office is under the administrative supervision of James D. Hart, director of The Bancroft Library.

Willa K. Baum
Department Head
Regional Oral History Office

11 September 1971
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San Francisco Bay Maritime History Series

Thomas Crowley, Recollections of the San Francisco Waterfront, 1967

Captain William Figari, San Francisco Bay and Waterfront, 1900-1965, 1969

Captain William J. McGillivray, Tugboats and Boatmen of California, 1906-1970, 1971

Captain Ernest W. Winther, Observations of San Francisco Bay from 1900 on, in process.

INTRODUCTION

William McGillivray was born in San Francisco on February 23, 1891. Like many another San Franciscan of his time, he found his life disrupted on April 18, 1906, when his home and school were both destroyed by the earthquake and fire. In this interview he recalls that event and its result, the beginning of his career as a tugboat man with Thomas Crowley.

As a young man, Captain McGillivray was "a good-looking happy-go-lucky sort of guy," whose love of fun and adventure was balanced by an innate ability to operate boats and an inherent practical good sense. This according to an associate of many years. Although several times he left the tugboats to try other careers, he always returned to the expanding Crowley organization, and he progressed steadily to positions of increasing responsibility. Shortly after the Standard Oil Company asked Crowley's Red Stack to send boats to San Pedro, Captain McGillivray became general manager of the organization there, the San Pedro Tugboat Company, continuing until his retirement at the end of 1970. He has served for many years on the board of directors of the Red Stack Towboat Company.

Captain McGillivray is known as a good storyteller, and a writer of tugboat reminiscences. His series of "I Remember When" sketches for the Pacific Work Boat appears as an appendix to this volume, as do numerous letters of recollections.

During his years at San Pedro, Captain McGillivray frequently came to San Francisco, usually spending an evening with Captain William Figari swapping reminiscences of the early experiences they shared. In the first session of this interview, on January 17, 1969, Captain Figari participated. It was held in San Francisco in a conference room at the Crowley offices at Pier 32. The second session, with Captain McGillivray alone, took place August 20, 1970, soon after the death of Thomas Crowley on August 4. It was held in a conference room at the then recently completed Crowley Tugboat & Launch Company headquarters at Pier 50.

In the first part of the interview McGillivray is several times referred to as "Mac," while Captain Figari is referred to as "Bill," "Willie," and "Will."

Shortly after Captain McGillivray's retirement, both participants read over the first section of the interview, and both made some minor corrections and changes. Captain McGillivray read and corrected the second section. On first reading the transcripts he thought that they needed "a lot of cleaning up," but agreed finally to the interviewer's request that the informal, conversational quality be retained.

Ruth Teiser
Interviewer

3 September 1971
Regional Oral History Office
486 The Bancroft Library
University of California at Berkeley

December 6,1971

Mrs Willa Baum
Regional Oral History Office
Room 486
University Of California
Berkeley, California 94720

Dear Mrs.Baum,

Received bound copy of TOWBOATS & BOATMAN OF CALIFORNIA and thanks for same. There are a few little corrections that I would like to note here below however the language of Figari and I does need some cleaning up. Letting the words just roll out in waterfront fashion doesn't look so good on paper. Also for about half of the time we didn't realize that it was all recorded on tape.

On page 9 in the last paragraph propeller is mispelled. On page ten Figari said "A fellow by the name of Capt.Mohr Earnest Mohr, a good towboat man" You may add that Mohr was in charge of the San Pedro Tugboat Company to start with and he was later relieved by Mc Gillivray.

On page 18 on the third statement from the bottom up, I should have sdded that the Shipowners & Merchants Towboat Company(Red Stacks had a number of stockholders in it but Tom Crowley took over and owned more than 50% of the stock. That made him the boss.

On page 20 look at the third paragraph and you will note that the word Kegs was left out at the end.

On page 21 on the third line of the third paragraph it may be good to leave out the words"come in here" as it seems to have no connection in the matter.

On page 22 it may be better if you add"on the raft" after the word night.

On page 23 in the last paragraph you may add"and get their gear from the rear of the barroom again.

On page 24 I should have said" French ship"in the second line and on the third line I should have said" be up on the bow"and not the bar.

On the last paragraph on page 27 it reads"Crowley have been very good to us and not has. Also on the 8th line of this paragraph you mention Thomas P. instead of Thamas B.Crowley.

On page 29 in the second line of the last paragraph We used to sleep aboard.that. Why not leave out the word that.

No 2- Mc Gillivray- Tugboats

On the last paragraph on page 30 on (last paragraph) the first line why not fill in"with a rockbarge"after the word Sonoma. It may be more understandable. Also in the second paragraph on page 30 . In the 5th line it would be better to say ("I saw them go ashore from the dredger in a skiff")to complete the sentence. In the 8th line state,"They came out in the little launch and took us back to lunch one at a time and one of us remained aboard the tug to take care of the tow.

Page 35- Figari-7th statement from the bottom states "Crowley had just about five men in the office, Miss Carey. (I would say "and Miss Carey who was the bookkeeper.

Page 41- The second Mc Gill.paragraph-The name of the movie actress on the Jack London picture,taken on board a schooner at a waterfront dock was Ana Nielsen. She was a star at that time. Charmain was Jack London's wife's name.

Page 46 On the Mc Gill second paragraph the Tug "Hercules" towed the locks to the Panama Canal but not the Hocks

Page 53-Mc Gill second paragraph 6th line from bottom (a big rock and threw it over Jim's head and and not off Jim's head.

Page 64 Second paragraph- First line- would like to have you name the school(Lowel High School) where you mention "not far from the school".

Page 85-Mc Gill second paragraph from the bottom up.(It was a steam) add the word tug to that.

Well that was about all that I could help you on. I guess that there is nothing that we can do about the poor waterfront language put out by Figari and myself but we had most of our schooling down on the docks and we understood eachother and that was all that mattered.

I want to thank you and Miss Teiser for the work that you people have done in getting up this manuscript and I hope that the information that you obtained will will be of some help to those of the new generation who may be interested in this sort of thing.

Yours truly

W. Mc Gillivray

W. Mc Gillivray

Tugboat Adventures

McGil: Bill, did you tell about the time we were towing the dredger and you left me at Angel Island?

Figari: No, I didn't.

McGil: Well, let me tell that one. Anyway, we were towing the dredger down from the Sacramento River (Bill knows all about this) and we had the tug Crowley #1, just the two of us on board. We were towing the dredger and we got into a terrible storm, and made it as far as Angel Island where we pulled in behind the island in the lee. We were pretty tired. We'd been running all night coming down from Sacramento, so I thought I'd like to take a sleep. But in the boat, the gas boat, it smells so much, distillate and gas, etcetera, that I thought, "I'll go back on the dredger." So I went back on the dredger that we were towing.

Figari: It was the dredger San Rafael.

McGil: Yes. Then, you remember, I went back and discovered a bunkhouse at the stern of the dredger. It was a floating bunkhouse and there were about seven bunks there, and I got up in one of them. There were a lot of pictures of ladies--naked women--around the walls where the dredger men had them, I guess, and I thought, "There's seven bunks there; I could sleep in a different bunk every night of the week if I stayed here." But there was nothing to eat, of course. All the eats were on the dredger. I went to sleep, however. I was tired out and the wind was blowing and everything. But in the meantime, it calmed down some, and Bill [Figari] thought that I was aboard the tug and he started out with the dredger. I was hanging behind with the bunkhouse, and the bunkhouse caught on a rock at Angel Island and the line broke and left me on the rocks at Angel Island. Figari went along with the dredger, not knowing that I was gone, and he went all the way over to San Francisco and up to the South Bay with the dredger. Then they looked and found that the bunkhouse was gone--and McGillivray was in the bunkhouse stranded.

McGil: Well, I stayed in the bunkhouse and thought, "All right, I guess I'll have to put the rest of my life in here," because there was a high cliff and I couldn't get up on the island. I was there with nothing to eat, but lots of bunks to sleep in. [Laughter.] I was stuck there, and I said, "Well, they may miss me, and if they do they'll re-enact the crime and they'll come back and try and find me." So, I stayed there all that day, all that night, and all the next day, and she was bouncing on the rocks there. And then a couple of days later a boat came up and they saw me and got ahold of me and towed me back to the dock. But I didn't get anything out of it but a good sleep, and nothing to eat at all.

Figari: You left something out, though. Remember, we went over to Tiburon, it was blowing like heck. And you landed me on the dock, you remember? I just about jumped on the dock . . .

McGil: O yeah . . . to get cigars.

Figari: It was rolling, see, so Mac* sung out, "Don't forget to get the cigars." So I said, "All right." We had no radios in the boat or anything, so I went up and telephoned the office to tell them where we were. We were in back of Angel Island, in Hospital Cove. (It used to be the [United States] quarantine station; I believe it's a park now over there.) So I got the cigars and I stuck them in my pocket. And when I got down, Mac said, "Did you get the cigars?" I said, "Yeah, I've got them in my pocket." I didn't have the cigars in my pocket; I had a hole in my pocket. [Laughter.] I lost all the cigars. And I walked up to pick them all up and he complained. He said, "They're all wet." [Laughter.] It was raining.

McGil: On that barge, by the way, when you fellows were coming across the Bay to get me, you figured that the bunkhouse must have broken adrift while you were crossing the Bay. But I was on Angel Island, and you were looking for me the next day over in Berkeley because the wind blew in that direction. They were in the wrong place. So they thought, "We'll start from the beginning, at Angel Island."

Teiser: When was that?

McGil: Oh, that was about 1908 or so--was that before the Fair in 1915?

Figari: Oh, that was 'way before the Fair.

McGil: Then 1912 or '13.

Figari: Yes, about 1911.

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* William McGillivray

Figari: Talk about sleeping, see, he could sleep! We were going down to the South Bay to get a dredger, the dredger Rough and Ready, down at Mount Eden Creek at Alvarado, and we got stuck on the shell bank and I couldn't turn the boat around. We couldn't get out. We just lay there. That was about eight o'clock in the morning. Mac said, "I'm hungry. I'm going to sleep." It was shallow and I had a high pair of boots, and I walked into Mount Eden. I get in at Mount Eden Creek and asked the fellow for a skiff to row out to the dredge [Rough and Ready]. I wanted to get something to eat. The fellow said, "All right." I couldn't row the boat. I had to push it ahead of me. The tide was very low. [Laughter.] So I got something to eat and went back to Mount Eden and--I don't remember how--I got on a Key Route ferry boat, with a pair of boots full of mud and everything. And I got down there [to the tug] the next night, and Mac was still asleep.

I went down with another little boat, eight horsepower, to pull my bow around so I could head out and hook onto the dredger to tow her up Fourteenmile Slough. Once you get into shallow water, you see, the boat will keep running. It won't steer when it's in mud, and it's all hard shells down there. That's why I could walk ashore. It used to be full of oyster beds down there on both sides of the Bay, all the way from Alameda Mole down there. There used to be oyster processing stations--Morgan Oyster Company--where the San Francisco Airport is now, too. The oyster company used to have all that, I know, because I used to take seed down there . . .

McGil: And they used to open the oysters for us down there and give us hot sauce to put on them and fill us up with oysters so we wouldn't steal them on the way back. [Laughter.] We took a cargo of oysters on our return to San Francisco.

Figari: So, you talk about sleeping--Mac slept! He had nothing to eat all day and all night and all through the next day. [Laughter.]

McGil: Bill, do you remember the time I went down to get the dredger to take it up to Petaluma Creek from El Dorado Creek, and I was on the boat and had a deck hand with me, some fly-by-night fellow, and we got stuck off the creek up there? And the dredging company tug towed the dredger out there with a small boat, and I saw the lights of the dredger out in deep water and I was stuck in the mud about three miles inshore. This deck hand said he'd go ashore and get some help if he could get ashore, but the mud was too soft and he'd sink up to his knees and so forth. And he had to walk in the mud about a mile; it was low water. So I gave him a couple of fire buckets and he put the fire buckets on his feet and he walked in the buckets holding the tail lines on the handles on the buckets, and the buckets didn't sink. And he got ashore and he never went

McGil: back to the office. He disappeared. They never saw him again. I was there all alone. Nobody knew where I was. I stayed there for three days and I never ate anything for three days. At each high water I tried to work the engine to get off. I had tug [Crowley #2] then. But I couldn't get off, and I could see the dredger out there waiting for the tug out in the deep water. I got so hungry, and you know that behind the boat there was a little puddle where the propellor had dug a hole. And there was a fish in there and I got the pike pole and I thought, "If I can catch the fish I'll cook the fish in the bucket and I'll eat the fish"--I was so hungry. But I couldn't catch the fish. So there was nothing for me to eat at all.

Figari: Mr. Crowley was very good at building boats, but he never built a boat to accommodate a crew. You remember the Crowley #14 and #15--they had a two-by-four pilot house. The same way with the tugs Crowley #1 and Crowley #2.

McGil: Yeah, they didn't have anything where you could lie down.

Figari: You couldn't steer down below. You had to steer aft. And to sleep you had to roll up in a blanket alongside of the engine, or sleep in those two bunks in the after deck. But now they have nice boats.

McGil: I was going to tell you the rest of that, the funny part of being stuck in the mud [near El Dorado Creek]. Evidently they missed me after a few days and they thought they'd send a boat down to see if they could find me. You remember Peeper Pipes, a launch operator?

Figari: Yeah.

McGil: Well, Pipes came down in a boat called the Sibyl. This night at high water I thought maybe I could get off--maybe a boat would come. I saw a light, a boat coming. I thought, "That's nice; that's somebody coming to pull my bow around and pull me off." And the boat went right by and he was far out. I waved a lantern--I did everything--but he went right by and passed me and he went out of sight. And my stomach was hitting my backbone I was so hungry. And about two hours later he came back again up the main channel, and that time he saw me and he pulled me off. I had to tow the dredger to Petaluma Creek just the same. I said, "I want to eat first." I went up in the dredger and they had all kinds of food on the table--those dredgers, they used to feed good, as Willie* knows. I went aboard the dredger and I couldn't eat. I was so hungry that I thought I could but I couldn't. I got sick trying to eat. And the next day was when I started to eat. That

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* William Figari

McGil: was quite a trip. But Tom Crowley, he was tough, you know, and when I came back instead of feeling sorry for me he said, "Damn you, I should take three days off your pay for getting stuck in the mud." [Laughter.]

Figari: Same way when I broke the exhaust pipe on the boat, the Spy. I was going out to take those lumber barges that were anchored off Mission Rock--the lumber was sticking out and broke the exhaust smoke stack. And it had no muffler on it. Boy, what a noise for three days! Crowley said, "Well, that will teach you a lesson now: be careful!"

Teiser: Let me just interrupt a second here to ask you--#2 was how big a boat?

Figari: They were 45 footers.

McGil: Which ones? Crowley #1 and #2?

Figari: Weren't they 45 feet?

McGil: Oh, they were longer than that. They were about 50 feet. #16 was 45, you know.

Teiser: #16 was 45?

McGil: Yeah, but we were on #1 and #2.

Figari: I ran the #1 and . . .

McGil: He ran the #1 and I ran the #2. They were sister ships.

Figari: You remember the time we were up-river towing the dredger, and it was blowing southeast and we were going up the Fourteenmile Slough with the little ditcher, and we had Charlie Carlsen in #6? So I got on #6 because it had a pilot house, see, and you and Jim Sinnott were in the #1.

McGil: Oh, yeah.

Figari: And it was blowing, and it was also raining like heck. Mac and Jim Sinnott were looking at the charts and Jim Sinnott said, "Where's this fellow going? He don't know where he's going." They were arguing the point and we passed them. I didn't know where we were going and he didn't know where we were going. So we got up in the Fourteenmile Slough, you know, with the ditcher and then he dropped his tow. I'll never forget. Sinnott came in

Figari: and he said, "Where the hell do you think you're at?" I said, "We're in the Fourteenmile Slough." He said, "Mac and I were looking at the chart and you passed it long ago." Do you remember? [Laughter.]

Teiser: What were you taking up there?

Figari: A dredger, a little ditcher.

Teiser: A ditcher?

Figari: It's a little dredger. They call it a ditcher.

McGil: What was that island just before you get to Dutch Slough? Not Sherman; on the opposite side.

Figari: That's Jersey.

McGil: Jersey Island.

Figari: That's Sherman on the left.

McGil: No, on the right going up.

Figari: That's Jersey, yeah.

McGil: Well, I wanted to go up to Dutch Slough and I had the #21, the Crowley #21, and there was a tule fog up there, and I went along the shore. I figured Dutch Slough is the next opening, and instead of that there was a break in the levee in Jersey Island and I went through the break in the levee not knowing it. And we went along and the deck hand said to me, "We just passed a barn and a housetop and a windmill." I said, "Well, what's the idea?" He said, "Well, I don't know, but we're in somebody's back yard." Well I dropped a hook because I didn't know, and when it cleared up we went in on the island and we were up in the farm yards there with the boat. Of course, there was about eight feet of water over the island. They had high levees and the levee just broke and my boat went through the break in the levee. So I had to find a hole to get out of the levee again.

Figari: That means the island was flooded up there.

McGil: Yeah, the island was all flooded--all the islands.

Teiser: Do you remember what year that was? Around 1918 somewhere through there?

Figari: Before 1918.

Teiser: Before 1915 you think?

McGil: Yeah, it was around 1913 or so. I was going to tell Willie--the time up in Stockton--I don't know whether he told you about that drink up there. Did he tell Miss Teiser about the drink?

Figari: No, I didn't.

McGil: The funny part of it was, I was over in Oakland talking to the girls in the shipyard office over there a few years ago.* And one girl said, "You and Willie have known each other for a long time." I said, "I can tell you a story and maybe you can figure it out from that how long I've known Willie. We're both not very young chickens right now. We were up at Stockton one time and I was deck hand with Willie and he said, 'It's a cold morning, Mac, let's go over and get a shot of whiskey.' I said yeah, and we went over to a saloon and I said, 'Give me a shot of whiskey.' And Willie said, 'Give me a shot.' And the bartender looked at me and said, 'How old are you, kid?' Willie said, 'Look at him. He's got whiskers on his face.' And he said, 'Well I don't know about you. This other fellow here, 'that's Willie,' he looks like I could give him a shot. He looks like he might be of age. But I won't give it to you.' Meaning Mac. We were both under age for a drink in the bar. So I said, 'Well, all right, we'll go without it.' So Willie give me a nudge as much as to say, 'I'll fix you up somehow.' So we went outside to a liquor store and Willie got a pint of whiskey and we went down and I had a drink on the boat." [Laughter.]

Figari: It was cold and we had to have something to warm us up, see. [Laughter.]

McGil: Then there used to be a place--what was that island where the ladies were, up there? That island as you go into New York Slough?

Figari: I can't think of its name. It's right across from Pittsburg--Black Diamond, they used to call it.

McGil: There used to be a lot of men that worked in Pittsburg, so across there on this island they had a lot of women. And they had a dance hall place in there and they had these women and everything. And they were certain kind of women and so forth.

Figari: Prostitutes.

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* The Pacific Dry Dock & Repair Company.

McGil: Anyway, we went up there and thought, well, let's stop at the island and go in and have a dance with the girls. So we tied the boat up outside the dock and they had a very frail dock outside--their own dock. We went in and we danced with the ladies and had a big time. They used to have a long ramp 'way out in the tules and they had little cottages where they used to take the men. But we went in and we had our drinks and dances; that's all we did. Then we went outside and, my gosh, the boat had got under the dock, the bow of the boat, and broke the dock. The tide came up some, and lifted the dock up. So we said, "Let's get out of here and get going." So we took our raft of piles and went up-river. We had to tow the piles up to Snodgrass Slough that time. And we went up there--went through the slough--the tides were very high. And there was a man on the levee with a shotgun to shoot us if we went fast to break the levee, you remember, because the tides were so high and the levee may break. So we went up there and that was all right. So, when we come down, after we left the tow of dock piling, we passed the island where the girls were and we blew the three whistles. And you know, that was the old days. They came out and waved their drawers at us. [Laughter.]

Figari: I don't remember stopping there, but I know we all used to wave at the girls as we went past.

McGil: There was another time we were up there and there was a dance at the Belshaw Hill up there in Antioch. We were tied up at the dock. We went up to the dance. There were some awful nice country people there and we danced with them and the girl that owned the store, the ice cream store, took us down and treated us to ice cream. Then we came back and we danced and everything. I'll never forget, around midnight a fellow in the balcony said, "Now coffee's gonna be served but don't all rush at once because we only have six cups." There were about 300 people there, I guess, from all the towns all around there. So that was fine, but one of the girls that I danced with--she was a very nice girl--I said, "How would you like to take a ride up the river with us? We're going up tomorrow and we'll drop you off on the way back?" She said, "That will be fine." Then she came over later and said, "Is it all right if I bring my husband along and his fish line?" I looked at Willie and said, "It's all off, Willie, the husband's coming with a fish line." [Laughter.] So we lost out there. But the girl and her husband came with us.

Figari: You know, every time we stopped at Antioch I said, "Mac, let's go up and get some grub." All we had was a little kerosene stove, a little burner, see, and we could make coffee on this thing and fry a couple of eggs or something like that. By the time you fried

Figari: the eggs the coffee was cold. So I sent Mac up. And he used to buy donuts and cakes. [Laughter.] He was a great cake eater.

We were going up and I said, "Mac, there's a watermelon boat over there at Sherman Island. Let's go over and buy a watermelon." So we went over there and there was nobody on the watermelon boat so we just helped ourselves. He came down from Lodi, and he had all kinds of watermelons.

McGil: We'd stop at Joe Fisher's up at Courtland and get beans and then steal his beer out through the back and put it on the boat.

Teiser: Joe Fisher?

McGil: Joe Fisher; he used to make a big pot of beans and we'd stop in there and he wanted to know all the news from San Francisco.

Teiser: Where was he?

McGil: He was at Courtland; that's up near Sacramento. But getting the news from San Francisco was like getting the news from New York. They never heard anything much up there, you know, and so forth. A newspaper two days old.

Here's a good one here that Will maybe remembers. When we were alongside the floats with the launches in the morning, we used to warm the launches up and I don't know whether I told you about . . .

Teiser: Was this when you were taking floats of logs?

McGil: No, we were tied up at the float at our home dock, warming the engine up at the float. Like you'd warm your engine up in your garage. But, we were warming the engine up at the float there and this wasn't me, but I was down the Red Stacks at the time. Anyway, the launch operator put the clutch in and was going ahead on the propellor, but it was tied up to the dock and the propellor was kicking up and kicking up. So he thought he'd go up and get a can of oil, and he went up into the boathouse to get the oil and in the meantime a ferry boat in the next slip come in and the boat jumped up and down, and when he came back there was no boat there. The boat had gone. It was a pretty big launch, too. I came down the Red Stacks that morning, I was captain on the Red Stacks, and the fellow in the office said, "Mac, here's a funny one. A boat come out of Crowley's dock away up at Howard Street Wharf, and it went around Goat Island and all the boats in the Bay were blowing whistles to pass it left and right, but it went through. There's nobody aboard but everybody thought it was all right." And he said,

McGil: "It come into the Red Stack dock here and it landed between two tugs and hit the fenders, the soft fenders, and it's jammed there and the engines are still going ahead on the launch, but the fellows haven't come down from the dock to pick it up as yet, see." And I said, "That's a funny one." It was really funny when the fellow come out and his launch had disappeared completely; it went out of the slip and went on its way.

Figari: Tom [Crowley] used to go down to San Pedro and visit you, Mac . . .

Teiser: When did you go down to San Pedro?

McGil: 1923.

Teiser: You went down to take over operation of a company that had been acquired by the Crowley interests?

McGil: Well, it was some of their boats that they sent down there.

Figari: A fellow by the name of Captain Mohr, Ernest Mohr, a good tow boat man . . .

Early Days With Crowley

Teiser: Before we come up to here, let me go back a little bit and ask you--you came to work for Tom Crowley in 1906?

Figari: Yeah, after the quake wasn't it, Mac?

McGil: After the earthquake.

Teiser: As a deck hand with Captain Figari? Was that your first job?

McGil: No, when I first came Mr. Crowley was taking his furniture over to Oakland because his house was going to burn down up here or was burned or something. And I had come down on the dock, running around with my cousin--just kids, see. I was fifteen years old.

Teiser: You were born in San Francisco?

McGil: Yeah, I was born in San Francisco in the Western Addition. So, I come down on the dock and Crowley said, "Hey kid, do you want to help me carry this furniture over to Oakland?" I said, "Sure."

Teiser: You knew who he was by sight?

McGil: I didn't know who he was, no. And he didn't know who I was. But we went over to Oakland and the people, during the fire, they could go to Oakland in a ferry boat but they couldn't come back. They didn't want anyone to come back to San Francisco. So, after we took the furniture over, there were a lot of people on the dock in Oakland, and they said, "We'll give you $20 a head to take us back to San Francisco." So Mr. Crowley said, "That's a good idea." So he collected the money and we come over to San Francisco. And he said, "Hey, kid, do you wanna make another trip to Oakland? We'll pick up some more money." And we went over to Oakland and picked up some more people. That was all right. So I said, "Gee that's a pretty good business. My school burned down so what's the use of going back to school?" So I came down the next day or so and I said to him, "Mr. Crowley, I'd like to work on the boats." So Crowley said, "I don't know, you're too young, but you go down there and work." So I worked but didn't get paid anything.*

Teiser: What did you do?

McGil: I handled freight and I was a deck hand, and Willie was there and I'd go with him. But I didn't get paid. He didn't pay me anything because he thought I was no good. Anyway, after a while they thought, "Well, we might as well put him on the payroll because it looks like we can't get rid of him." [Laughter.] So they gave me five dollars a week. That was my first pay, which I thought was fine. And they kept me on that five dollars so long, and all I did was handle freight and work and go stay out all night. I had to sleep in the boathouse. Crowley said, "Listen, young fellow, you know you work half your life and you sleep the other half." We didn't, because we worked 16 hours. "And if you can't enjoy your work your life is lost, so you might as well just stay and work no matter what you get." So I said to him later, "How about getting $7.50 a week? I could use a little more money, Mr. Crowley." He said, "No, you'll only spend it on liquor and women anyway. Keep on $5." So he kept giving me the $5. So we went along and later on I got a little boat to run.

Teiser: What was that boat?

McGil: It was called the Spy. You remember the little Spy? Then I got the General. Do you remember the General?

Figari: Yeah.

Teiser: How big was the General?

McGil: She was only about 30 feet.

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* See also pp. ff.

Figari: He bought the General from somebody and he bought the Imperial and he bought the Warrior.

McGil: He had the Ensign, the Warrior, the Escort, the Envoy.

Teiser: How big were they?

McGil: Oh, they were fairly good sized . . .

Figari: I don't know, they were only about 35 feet. The first boat Mr. Crowley built was the Jennie C. . . .

McGil: That's before my time.

Figari: And he sold it to a fellow by the name of Von Loben Sels up in Courtland. I delivered it up to Snodgrass Slough and they had put a new Hercules engine in. And I had Willie Gray with me (his father* was head of the Red Stack Tug Boat Company, then, before Mr. Crowley) and Louis Badaracco; they wanted to take a ride. So the three of us went up, and on the way up we stopped at Point San Pablo. We were pouring oil and white lead in the bearings. Everything got hot. On the way up we stopped off at Point Monroe, stopped at Port Costa. The funny thing, the next morning when Mr. Von Loben Sels met us at Antioch, she ran like a sewing machine. [Laughter.]

Then I delivered the Escort up to Brown up at Walnut Grove.

McGil: Remember when the Envoy blew up? The fellow went in with the lamp and broke the windows across the street on the water front.

Teiser: What was that?

McGil: They had gas fumes in there and the boat was closed up, you know, and . . .

Teiser: The Envoy blew up entirely?

McGil: It blew all the windows out across the Embarcadero there. And his [Captain Figari's] brother--a boat blew up on his brother and killed his brother. He was a fine boy, Pete.

Teiser: Was he on a Crowley boat that blew up?

Figari: No, he worked for [Jim] Wilder. It was on his birthday, the second of December. He was 29 years old.

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* William J. Gray

McGil: We were filling the boats up one time. I was night man there and Bill--what was his name--you know--he used to drink so much?

Figari: Bill Dillon?

McGil: Bill Dillon was night man. He was so particular about tying up the boats. And then I ran the Warrior, but she had a leaky gas tank inside and gasoline was running down the floor. And I had a lantern. We had no electric lights in those days. I went inside with the lantern to start the engine so I could move the boat over to the other side and tie her up for the night. And when I did the fire caught the lantern and it caught my hand and my hand was all afire and everything, and the boat went into a blaze inside. It was all just a ball of fire in the cabin. I jumped overboard at the dock. I was at the bulkhead. I jumped overboard as the boat burned here, and I got down underneath the boat, as I thought the gas tank was going to blow up. I just had my head above the water a little bit. It burned and burned, but the gas tank didn't blow up. We had just filled it up.

Figari: You burned distillate then.

McGil: Distillate. So I says, "I better get up on the dock." So I climbed up on the boat again and I got up on the dock, and just as I was climbing over the dock, like this, the fire boat come in, and he had his nozzle shooting out water, and he hadn't had it pointed at the boat as yet, and it hit me in the hind end and shot me across the dock. And I got splinters in my hand and everything and I had these big blisters, you know, that come on my hand and everything, later. So I got up and went down to Emergency Hospital at the Ferry. Then they bundled my hand up and I went home. I lived with my grandmother then and so I said, "I guess I'm fired because I burned up that boat there." The boat didn't burn completely up. They put a new house on it. But Mr. Crowley called up my grandmother a couple of days later and said, "Send him back to work again. I've got another boat for him to burn up."

McGil: So when I got my hand all fixed up, I got back and went to work again. He was quite a card.

But also speaking of the boat--I think I wrote you about the boat at the slip. We were warming up the engine and Mr. Crowley come out. I had the engine running for a long time, burning distillate gasoline--I say "distillate;" you don't know what that is. That's old time stuff--

Figari: It's like diesel oil now.

McGil: --it's like kerosene--the boat was running, and I'm warming the engine and warming the engine, and Tom Crowley looked at it and thought, "That fellow's been warming the engine up now for half an hour burning up good gasoline"--it cost six cents a gallon--and he says, "Hey, Mac, who the hell are you working for, the Standard Oil or me?" [Laughter.] And then I understood what he means. [Laughter.] I was burning up all the oil for the Standard Oil.

Teiser: I asked Captain Figari for this kind of background. You worked around, and then they finally let you be Captain Figari's deck hand?

McGil: Yes, I was deck hand for Captain Figari and some other fellows--Red Lattimore and other people around there. Then I got to run a boat after a while. But I attribute everything to Captain Figari, more or less. He showed me how to run all those boats and he was quite a river pilot. You couldn't beat him. We used to go up the river together. He showed me the river, explained everything to me.

Teiser: Did you have no charts for the river?

McGil: Yes, we had a chart, but we weren't regular navigators I guess.

Figari: We had a blueprint chart from Antioch on up. It didn't give you the depth of the water. From Antioch up going to Stockton, and from Rio Vista going up to Sacramento, there were no more lights, and you had to feel your way in the dark. We knew the way all the time.

McGil: We were towing a big lot of piles up the river one time and it was kind of new to me up there, too. So I said to Will, "How far do we have to go to get to Stockton?" We were only making about a mile an hour and it was going to take a long time. I called to a fellow over on the beach, on the levee there. I said, "How far is it to Stockton?" And the fellow said, "Ten miles." And Will says, "Well, that isn't bad." So we went for another hour and we saw another fellow on the levee and Figari asked him, "How far is it to Stockton?" He said, "Twenty-two miles." [Laughter.] I said to Willie, "We must be going the wrong direction." So Willie says, "Climb up on the light pole and see if you can see the dome in Stockton on the City Hall. If you do we're getting near it." I climbed up on the pole and I could see the top of the dome, and I said, "We're on the right track." [Laughter.] Do you remember that, Will?

Figari: Oh yeah. There were a lot of different sloughs up there. You had to be careful you didn't get into the wrong one.

McGil: I'll tell you another funny one--well, I guess you know about this one too, Willie. I went up to tow a dredger down from way up near Sevenmile Slough, and when I got up there with the tug, the dredger wasn't ready, and the fellow wanted to make us comfortable because he didn't want us to leave him. To the captain of the dredger, I said, "You were supposed to be ready." He said, "No, but do you ever go hunting?" I said, "No." "Well," he said, "you and your deck hand can take a couple of shotguns and go down to the levee. You might shoot some ducks." I said, "All right." I was practically afraid to shoot guns. I never had shot a gun. So we each took a shotgun and we went a way down the levee, and after a while I looked and there were about ten ducks in a pond there behind the levee down near a tree. So I says, "Oh boy, sneak up easy." It took us quite a while to sneak up and get our guns ready and then all of a sudden I let her go and a fellow stuck his head out from behind a tree and said, "What are you shooting at my decoys for?" [Laughter.] I says, "Oh boy, am I a hunter!" [Laughter.] The fellow was in there watching for the ducks to land and he had his decoys floating in the lake and I shot at his decoys.

Figari: We never had anything to eat in the boats, that's one thing. [Laughter.]

McGil: We had to eat the grass from off the levee.

Figari: Mr. Crowley said, "You look at the scenery as you're going up the river"--I think it was Dave Crowley--"Look at the scenery and you forget about eating."

Teiser: Didn't you ever carry any stores with you?

Figari: No, he never gave us any money to buy stores.

McGil: No, I know they didn't. [Laughter.] I come down Steamboat Slough one time and I had a bargeload of oil, you know, one of our barges, and I got stuck in Hog's Back. We had beans on the stove and everything, and my boat stuck on the Hog's Back and the barge was shallow. We were made fast alongside the barge, pushing it. So the barge slipped out and broke the lines and went on down the river with the freshet, and here I was in my boat, with beans all over the cabin below, as the tug listed and all the beans went all over down below the deck. The pot turned upside down. And here I was alone. And there was my deck hand waving at me. He was going down the river, turning around, drifting and drifting

McGil: far away. I thought, "He's on the way anyway; that's the direction we're going if I get off." I backed and filled in the sand. I loosened the sand under the boat. I eventually got off and over Hog's Back. Then I caught up with him and I tied up again. But while I was stuck in the mud, he gained about three miles, so we were that far ahead.

Teiser: You're saying "Hog's Back"?

McGil: Hog's Back; wasn't that the name of it. It was a shoal named Hog's Back.

Figari: Yeah [in], Steamboat Slough.

Teiser: There are so many local names up there.

McGil: Yeah, they have some odd names.

Teiser: Your headquarters were always in San Francisco?

McGil: Yes.

Teiser: How long would you be away at a time?

Figari: Sometimes a week, a week at a time. We used to go up and deliver--I showed her the picture of you delivering gasoline on the levee, you know, the [Crowley] #1 and the #1 barge and the derrick on it.

McGil: Oh yes.

Figari: We used to have that fellow Jack Hunt; he used to put on fifty gallon drums of gasoline, and we used to collect the money. [Laughter.]

McGil: You know, the funny thing, I've been married 52 years, and we used to go up the river with the water barge. When we went up to get water for the railroad, we used to open valves admitting water through the bottom of the barge and go up and get water up above Rio Vista there in --what was that slough there?

Figari: Cache Creek.

McGil: We went up into Cache Creek and everything. We'd stop at Rio Vista to get food and things. There was a convent there. And the nuns would bring the young girls down and they'd run around on the tug and the barge because they never saw much of boats up there 'way up in the river and everything. And one of those

McGil: girls is my wife today. They'd run around the barge. Of course at that time she was just a little blonde girl and everything. So I always tell her, "Funny, I could have pushed you overboard then and saved all this trouble all these years." [Laughter.] She says, "How about me pushing you overboard? I could have pushed you overboard." [Laughter.]*

She came later to San Francisco and she worked for a steamship company.

Figari: She worked for Struthers and Dixon.

McCil: She worked for Struthers and Dixon. I used to pilot their ships in here into the docks sometimes. There's a Captain Olegreen, and she used to call his wife and tell her when he was coming in to come down and pick him up in the car and everything. And he thought quite a bit of her, and her name was McGillivray, of course, and he thought it was my sister. And he'd say, "I brought your sister a lot of silk stockings and things from the Orient." I said, "that's good. Bring her that. Bring her all the stuff you want. That's fine." [Laughter.] He didn't know until years later that it was my wife he was bringing silk stockings to.

Teiser: Captain Figari, did you bring large ships in?

Figari: No, I didn't.

McGil: Well the idea was, I might have done the same as he did--he stayed with the Crowley Company. When Crowley bought the Red Stacks, I somehow or other got into the Red Stacks, captain of a steam tug. And their steam tug captain goes on the bridge of all the ships and handles the ships. Then after, when I got the experience, I got to go up and handle ships, too. I'd take the ships up the river and different things. When I went down to San Pedro I retired from that occupation.

Teiser: When did you go into the Red Stacks?

McGil: What year was that--1916, 1917?

Figari: After the '15 Fair. Tom Crowley took over the Red Stacks in 1916, I think, '16 or '17.

Teiser: Was that his entry into handling big ships?

McGil: Yes.

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* See also pp. - .

Teiser: He hadn't before that?

McGil: Crowley had a steam tug that he bought here. Captain Mohr was on it. Mohr was a former launchman.

Figari: He bought the old H. H. Buhne. Purchased it in Eureka.

McGil: Yeah, she was built in 1869. Changed the name to Sea Wolf when Red Stacks took her over.

Figari: Then he bought the Red Stacks.

Teiser: Crowley took over the Red Stacks?

McGil: He bought them out, yes.

Teiser: Who owned the Red Stacks before he bought them out?

McGil: Captain Gray.

Figari: Captain Gray and a fellow by the name of Curry.* Then there were a lot of shipowners; it was the Shipowners' & Merchants' Tug Boat Company, and a lot of shipowners owned it, and Gray and Curry and Captain Clem Randall were the ones that operated it.

McGil: Did I ever tell you the time . . .

Teiser: Let me ask you just a little bit more about this before you leave it. Did Mr. Crowley buy the whole thing outright from this group?

Figari: Well, he took over.

McGil: Yes, he bought it . . .

Figari: All the owners were in it, see, but Curry and Captain Gray all got out, see.

McGil: Mr. Crowley bought it.

Teiser: Bought it himself, as an individual? Then put his people in charge of it?

McGil: More or less. He kept one of the men there, one of the bookkeepers there; Jack Bolger,** he kept him.

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* John W. Curry. He was secretary, and William J. Gray was superintendent.

** John E. Bolger.

Teiser: But the rest were . . .

McGil: Well, the rest got out. Bill Randall* got out. Then Captain [William J.] Darragh came in. Crowley took him off a tug. He was a tugboat captain, and he put him in the office.

Along the Waterfront

Figari: And he had Tom Tomalson in there for a long while, too, as dispatcher.

McGil: Yeah, Tom Tomalson. [Laughter.] Oh, he was a card. He was a Norwegian. Did I write you the one about the barge, when it came up and dry-docked his tug? Well, we were on the end of the dock that time and he was towing a rock barge, see, and the tug was towing it down the Bay. But the rock barge was leaking and loaded with rock, and it was very low in the water. It was taking water. Then, all of a sudden, the rock barge went down and it sunk down, and as it went down it turned over and it dumped all the rock out and Tom stopped and backed up and he backed over it, and the barge come up and dry-docked him and his tug. And there he was drifting down the Bay on the bottom of the barge. There was air inside the barge, you know, and he was dry-docked on the barge, and he was blowing the whistle on the steam tug for us to come out and help him. We had to go out there with a tug and tow him into dock and get the tug off the top of the barge and get the barge from under the tug, you know. It was quite a thing. We used to call him "Smokestack." He was quite a sloppy guy and the fellow in the office always used to say he could always tell what he had for breakfast or for dinner. If he had a gold chain, you know, then he had eggs for breakfast. [Laughter.] And if he had a pearl pin in his tie, we knew he had sago pudding for dessert. [Laughter.] Because he always got stuff all over him.

Figari: Well, they were all sailing ships then. And the Red Stacks, before Crowley owned them, used to dock the ships, see. And we used to run lines from them to the docks. And there was a Chinaman we called "Chinee Harry." The captain of the tug would blow the whistle, see, either to back or go ahead. And Harry, on the dock, he'd blow a whistle, too. And he'd catch the line. The captains used to give him a couple of nickels, you know. [Laughter.]

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* William M. Randall

McGil: Then there was a fellow who used to come around--of course money was worth something in those days, but he used to pick up the pennies, and we'd give him pennies and he'd get enough to buy a bottle of wine and so forth. I don't know what his name was--Pete--but we were all down on the Red Stack dock at one time. And he was down on the dock. We were on the upper platform, on the veranda, and we had a lot of pennies, and we threw them down on the dock, and he'd pick up the pennies. Well, he was about 65 years old, so we were betting and wondering how many pennies he'd pick up before he broke his back. And we kept throwing them down and he kept picking them up until after a while there were four or five pennies on the dock and he just looked at them and couldn't pick them up. So we figured he was finished and went down and gathered up the pennies and gave him the pennies, you know. It was hard picking them up one at a time. [Laughter.] It almost killed him.

Then, at Howard Street, I always think of a funny one, too. They used to have like this--they had a mooring pile that come up through the dock, and the sailing ship would put the line over the mooring pile, you know, to moor the ship. And they'd heave it up tight, you know, as a rule. But right here in this special part of the dock where we put the pile, there was no mooring pile. But we found one they sawed off while the piledrivers were working. It was about six feet long and it was about a fourteen-inch pile, and we stood it up on the dock in front of the boathouse there. And then an old drunk comes along and he's tired and he leans up against it. And he and the pile go down on the wharf and the pile tips over and he falls down with it. He thought it was one of those mooring piles, see; it was just standing there. [Laughter.]

And then they used to sleep in the coal bunkers. They'd drink their beer down the Vallejo Street Wharf and all those kegs of beer would come in, empty kegs, and they'd drain out all the . . .

Figari: They'd drain them out.

McGil: They'd drink that, and then they'd go to sleep in the coal pile. And then, I know, I used to come to work in the dark in the morning and I'd go through the coal bunkers sometimes to go to my tug, and I'd give them all a kick on the foot and wake them all up and so forth. But, speaking of coal, I want to tell you this before I forget it. It's really funny about Tom Crowley,

He had some scow schooners one time, sailing schooners, and there was one of them that carried coal out to the government station there at Fort Baker all the time. And they'd load coal all

McGil: day and then they'd sleep in the scow, and in the morning we would tow them out. And we'd take the coal out to Fort Baker. And this fellow's name was Fred Cleaso and he was captain of the scow. He was just full of coal from one end to the other. But he figured, what's the use of taking a bath and losing that much sleep; as he had to unload the coal in the morning. So he'd get in the bunk and put the comforters over him with the coal dust and everything. So I said to Tom one time, "That fellow Cleaso, he never washes up or anything. He sleeps all night in that coal dust and everything." He says, "He was getting a divorce and his wife told the judge that. The only use he has for water is to sail in it." [Laughter.] I thought that was good.

Figari: Tell her about Jack the Grappler.

McGil: Jack the Grappler, he was a character that used to have a skiff and he'd go around and he'd pick things up in the bottom of the Bay. They used to say he could read the name on an oyster can at the bottom of the Bay. He had these sticks and these grappling hooks, you know, and he did a lot of good. They used to lose trucks off the dock, hand trucks, and he'd locate them and he'd get a line on them and they'd pull them up.

Teiser: How could he locate them? Isn't it pretty deep?

McGil: Not too deep, about thirty feet or so, but he had these poles and hooks. And he could locate anything in the bottom of the Bay. A woman lost her passport one time, come in here, and he found the passport at the bottom of the Bay. He got that for her. She was off one of the China ships. It was a Japanese woman. Anyway, that fellow Jack, he didn't have any place to sleep much, and he used to drink quite a bit, and I know he'd be there on the dock and I'd say, "Jack, you want to go across the street and get a drink?" And he'd say, "Yeah." And I'd say, "Follow me across the street." Well, I was a young fellow and he couldn't walk as fast as I could, and I'd go in the front door of the saloon and go out the back door. And when he got in the bar there was nobody there. He said, "The fellow was gonna buy me a drink--where is he?" "Nobody's in here," the bartender said. [Laughter.] So he couldn't figure out what happened, see.

Anyway, there was a big raft floated in just like this table [about 3' x 8' or 9']. It floated in under a high spring tide and it caught under the dock. So he slept on that under the dock, after spiking it to the piling. He put a mattress on it and everything. And he slept there. The fact is there was a woman who he said was his wife, she slept with him sometimes too. But he'd get

McGil: good and drunk and he'd sleep under the dock. Then one time there was a truck come on the dock; it backed up, and there were about 25 cases of porter on the dock. And the truck backed up and knocked the porter over and it all sunk down to the bottom of the Bay. So, Jack, being he was an expert, some of the scow schooner fellows come to him and said, "Jack, how about getting the porter up?" He said, "On Saturday night we'll go and get drunk. I'll get anough porter for us." So every Saturday night he'd bring up one case. It was in a good place. Nobody could get it but him. [Laughter.] He'd bring up one case and they'd drink the whole case of porter every Saturday night until all the porter was gone that he had down in the bottom of the Bay. [Laughter.]

But, to climax the story, I was sleeping in the boathouse there one night. It was a moonlit night and another one of those spring tides. And I looked out the window and I thought, my Lord what is that going out of the slip there? So I went out and put my pants on and everything and went out and there was Jack, sound asleep on his raft and floating out of the slip. The high tide took the thing off and broke it loose and he was floating out of the slip--drunk and sound asleep. So I started up the launch and went out and got ahold of it and pulled it back into the float and took him and pulled him off it again. That was the last time he was in there. But he was on his way to Oakland that night. [Laughter.]

Figari: He was a character.

McGil: He was quite a character. He'd do anything for a drink of whiskey, you know, and we used to have a lot of fun with him. Of course whiskey in those days was only ten cents a glass. He'd drink three or four glasses and he'd drop over. [Laughter.] But we had a lot of fun down there.

Teiser: You said he was on his way to Oakland. Was that where the tides would take you if you . . .

McGil: No, he was just headed in that direction. Well, he would get out in the Bay and he'd get in the tide, you know . . .

Teiser: He wouldn't go out through the Gate?

McGil: Well, it depends, the ebb tide--maybe he'd go down that way, but he wouldn't have been on there long. Somebody--he'd have woke up or he'd have done something.

Figari: Everybody knew him.

McGil: Everybody knew Jack the Grappler. He was a good fellow. He wouldn't do anybody any harm.

Figari: When you have high tides, they run out to minor, and they run like that, see, and smaller tides . . .

Teiser: So he could be carried any place?

Figari: Yeah, and then the winds blow. You get these winds and they blow off the docks and they could blow him over to Goat Island or some place if there's much of a tide. [Laughter.]

McGil: Yeah, I'd say, "Jack, can you change a quarter?" And he'd say, "I think I can." I'd say, "Well, lend me a dime." "No." [Laughter.]

Teiser: The bars, the saloons in those days, were they all around?

Figari: Right across the street from the boathouse. Howard Street and Mission Street.

McGil: And we didn't think anything of going over there and getting a shot any time. We used to drink a whole lot.

Teiser: Who ran the bars over there?

Figari: Oh, different people.

McGil: There was [William H.] Rehmstedt and those fellows. That fellow that had the nick in his head where the fellow hit him with the bottle.

Figari: There were all kinds of fellows across the street and then on Steuart Street.

Teiser: You mean, there were lots of bars?

McGil: Oh, they were all bars. Every place was a bar. They served steam beer in those days, invented by a man named Steam.

Figari: On the corner of Market and the Embarcadero, the Ensign Saloon was there. There's a big place. Then from there on there were all kinds of bars.

McGil: You see, the sailors in those days, they would come and put all their belongings and everything in the bar. They let the fellow keep all the stuff in the back. And then they'd spend all their money and then they'd have to go to sea again.

Teiser: Were the saloon keepers pretty honest with them?

McGil: Oh yeah, they were fairly honest.

Figari: Lots of them, like the Alaska Packers, used to come in. The Jortall brothers,* used to go down to the ships and take these Swede fishermen ashore. And they had a big place on Embarcadero, Eighth Street, they used to call it, and it was a store. And he used to store all their baggage, see, and then they used to--all ex-sailors, see--and in the summertime they'd go to Alaska fishing, see, and in the wintertime they'd go to sea. And he used to store their baggage for them. And then when they wanted to go to sea, they'd go in there. A lot of them would lose their checks or something. But these Jortall brothers, they remembered their faces and they could always find their baggage for them. It was the darndest thing you'd ever seen. [Laughter.] I went over one day with a fellow that was gonna ship out. So Jortall said to him "I think I remember you. Let's go down here and look around." The place was full of clothes, you know, sailor's clothes.

Teiser: Were they in bags?

Figari: Sailor's bags, yeah, and suitcases and all that stuff. They used to take care of all that. They were ex-sailors themselves.

McGil: Well it was quite a thing in those old days, I can remember being up in the boathouse and the ship would be at the dock and the Frenchman would be up on the bar playing the accordion there at 12:00 at night. Then at two in the morning they'd throw them out of all those saloons across the street. They'd kick them all out in the street after they spent their money, and lock up. They had accordions over there. They'd be playing and you'd hear music all night over there or until they were tossed out.

Figari: You were an accordion player, too.

McGil: Yeah, I used to play the accordion. [Laughter.] I told you the one about Tom and taking the money up to the bank in the horse and buggy, didn't I?

Teiser: You wrote that, but tell it. Let's put it on the tape.

McGil: Well, we were collecting a lot of money from the sailors coming off the battleships and everything, Jim Sinnott and I. Sinnott was an old-timer with the company. We were making change and so forth. But to make it short, I got home and I found money in my

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* Nicholas and Christian Jortall.

McGil: upper pocket and money here and there because we made so much change and all that. So I come in in the morning and I come in the inside office here, like this, and I put some of the money back in the sack. And Tom Crowley come in and he said, "What the hell are you doing, Mac?" I said, "I'm putting back some of the money I found in my pocket that I collected yesterday. It belongs to you; it doesn't belong to me." He said, "All right. Take that sack of money and put it in the back of the horse and buggy. Take it up to California Street up to the California Bank and get a receipt for it." And I put it in and took it up to the bank. I said, "How much is it, Tom, that's in the sack?" He said, "I don't know, that's their business. Let them count it." [Laughter.] He wasn't gonna waste time counting it. There were too many quarters. [Laughter.]

Figari: They used to roll all the quarters and dimes and nickels and halves and everything else. They don't have to do that now. Because they had this fellow by the name of Bickford, see, and Dave Crowley said, "Let Bickford take care of all the money," you know, from the battleships and everything. So this fellow put all the money in the sack, see--Bank of America over on Mission and Embarcadero there--so he takes the whole sack and he dumps it in the bank and the fellow says, "What's this?" And he says, "It's for deposit." And he says, "Well, you're supposed to roll it up and count it. "You roll it up and count it!" [Laughter.]

McGil: In those days you didn't have the taxes. We had a directors' meeting. I was down there, in 1969, at the San Francisco office--not this time, but last time--and Mr. Crowley, Jr. . . .

Figari: Was he down there this time?

McGil: Yeah.

Figari: Was Senior down there?

McGil: No, no, he wasn't down there. I was up to his house last night. But Tom was going through everything--the statements of the Red Stacks, the inside tugs, the outside tugs, the Alaska work, how much they make and the depreciation, taxes and everything--and he talked and he talked and he talked. He had all the stockholders down there and everything. Of course, when he got through he said, "Has anybody got anything to say?" I said, "Who the hell could say anything after all you said?" He said, "I know I talk too much." I said, "All that stuff that you got there, your dad" (he was sitting there then, you know). I said, "Your dad and I used to have a cash register down at Howard Street and we used to collect money for the captains going out to the ship and the

McGil: different things, and then in the morning we'd just pull the drawer out and dumped it upside down and divided the money up and that was it. We didn't go through all that talk. You didn't have taxes in those days." He said, "I know, you didn't have a lot of things." [Laughter.]

Figari: We used to dump it in on Miss [Marie] Carey.

McGil: Yeah. Miss Carey was our bookkeeper and she handled all the cash.

Figari: She used to count it. [Laughter.]

Teiser: Did she roll it up, Miss Carey?

Figari: Oh yes, she rolled it up.

McGil: I told you about me borrowing the money off of Tom Crowley, Sr.--I wrote you that, didn't I?

Teiser: Yes. You wrote, "I borrowed $1,350 off him one time to furnish my house when I first got married."

McGil: And he said, "What the hell? Are you furnishing the Palace Hotel?" He was quite a card. [Laughter.]

"<u>If You Don't Show Up on Sunday</u> . . ."

Teiser: How did you get to San Pedro--the Southern California operation? You said that you went down there in 1923, was it? Just before that had you been working on . . .

McGil: On the tugs. Yes.

Tesier: On the tugs here?

McGil: On the Red Stacks in San Francisco.

Teiser: Then how did it happen that you went down there? What was the reason?

McGil: Well, there was a fellow down there--the way I always put the story--there's a fellow named Captain [Ernest] Mohr, former San Francisco tug captain, and they sent him down there. He worked for the Red Stacks on the tugs. And he became sick--he had a goiter or something--so they said, "You go down there and stay there until he comes back."

Teiser: Why was he down there?

McGil: Well, he took the first boat down to open up the business. The Standard Oil Company requested that they send boats down there. There were no boats in the harbor.

Teiser: When was that that the first boats went down?

McGil: About '21. So Mohr was down there a couple years.

Teiser: With how many boats?

McGil: Oh, he only had about three steam tugs. I've got ten now. So Mohr was down there and he got sick. And I said, "Well, I'll just stay down there long enough until he gets well and gets back." And Tom said, "That's all you have to do." So I always tell everybody that if he don't come back pretty soon I'm gonna take his job. I've been down there 43 years. [Laughter.] However, they made me all kinds of offers--"We'll buy you a home down there," we'll do this and that. "As long as the wife says it's okay, I'll run up to San Francisco once in a while." So I managed to break away.

But San Francisco--my mother and father were born here. My father was a graduate of the University of California. He just happened to get out; he graduated as a mining engineer and just in the '98, you know, breakup. Then he went up on that gold rush up there [in Alaska] and he made quite a bit of money. But he kind of put it over the roulette wheel, too.

But, nevertheless, I got down there and I got used to San Pedro more or less. And the wife got friendly with a lot of people and now it's more like home. We built a nice home and we have everything. Crowley have been so very good to all of us--to Willie and myself--that it's just out of this world. There's just nothing to it. They just see that you are well paid and everything else. I told young Tom--I call him "young Tom," Thomas P.--I said, "Now listen, when I was a young fellow I got $5 a week and my girl friends needed silk stockings any everything. Boy, I couldn't buy them silk stockings, I couldn't buy them any decent drinks or anything else. Now they're all in a rest home or dead and gone or something else, you're paying me a large salary. Why didn't you do that a long time ago when I needed it?" "Well," he says, "you have to take it anyway." So, I don't know. So that's it.

Teiser: Aren't there a good many second and third generation people with the Crowley organization? I think your son is with them, Captain Figari, and aren't there others?

McGil: Yes. There are other ones. Max Jahn's son is over there at the Red Stacks.

Figari: I know Max Jahn, but I don't know his son. I don't know how long he's there.

Teiser: People stay long with the Crowley organization.

McGil: Oh, they stay a long time, and it's a funny thing. They're rough with you, too, at times. I don't know, there's just something about it. As far as the senior goes, he was a real rough, tough fellow. But he just had a heart as big as a football. But he wanted you to think he was tough and he used to give us hell. He didn't give Willie much, though. He always used to get along pretty good with him. But he'd call me in the office and he'd bawl me out for different things, you know, and everything. But he liked somebody who'd fight back and I always used to fight back with him. And he kind of liked that. He kept an eye on me all the time and if I'd take a vacation or go away he'd say, "What the hell do you want a vacation for? Your whole life is nothing but a vacation."

Figari: You were off on Sundays sometimes. [Laughter.]

McGil: If you didn't show up on Sunday, you know, you're a cad! You had to show up on Sunday.

Figari: "You're on vacation all the time."

McGil: We'd buy the food for the boat and he'd pick out the stuff he didn't think we needed. "What do you want ketchup for?" And he'd take it all away. [Laughter.] He'd take it home himself, or give it away. We were allowed wholesome food only.

Figari: What food?

McGil: When they'd get food--whenever they'd get it. [Laughter.] We had beans, canned beans and stuff like that, you know, and all that kind of stuff. We slept on the life preservers for a pillow. [Laughter.]

Figari: Red Lattimore stayed here. He had a couple of dredgers. They had those sticks, those poles, you know, the dredgers . . .

McGil: Yeah, I remember.

Figari: So they sold them to a fellow up the river, see . . . two mud barges and a water barge and this little dredger. And I think I had Tug #14, I don't remember, and Red Lattimore was my deck hand and we went up the river. They had a spud right in the center, I don't know if you remember that, right in the center, a spud, you know . . .

McGil: Yeah, I remember, a hole so you could swivel on it.

Figari: So we were going up--we got into the New York Slough and went right off of the island where the girls are, see, and it stuck there. And I could turn it around, see, but I couldn't go ahead and I couldn't back up. So I said to Red Lattimore, "I think that spud there." So we got a block and tackle and raised this spud up, see, and then we went along. [Laughter.] A spud is like an anchor--these dredgers have them to hold them there when they dredge. Now they have them at each corner.

So we went up and Red said, "Gee I'm hungry." And we stopped at Antioch--a fellow by the name of Scotty up there ran a restaurant up there. And we had a steak.

McGil: Who was the guy on the river steamer you used to know? We used to go in and see him. On the Santa Fe river steamer? Named Frances?

Figari: Mike Coleman; he was caretaker on the Frances during winter months. We used to sleep aboard that. They'd give us a bunk. But we had steak and we had ham and eggs. We were hungry. So we went up the river. We delivered the two mud barges in Old River to a dredger, see, and it was quite a tow, you know, and it took us all night to get up there, see, from Antioch. So we got up there and the captain said, "How about some breakfast?" And I said, "Oh boy, I'm hungry. Let's have some breakfast." I'll never forget; he gave us catfish for breakfast. So then I left the mud barges at Old River, mouth of Old River, and then went up to Stockton. We got about a mile from Stockton--there's a dairy ranch on the right hand side, if you remember, going up, and there was a little cut there, and I'd go ahead and get that far and I couldn't get any further. And I'd let her go back and then I'd try again. I couldn't get it past there, so Red said, "I'm hungry." So he jumped on the passenger boats, launches; you remember they had little launches that went around all through the islands, they had no bridges then. And they used to have the clothing man and the butcher and all that used to go around in the boats. I told

Figari: him, "You get a hold of Dixon in Stockton because I need a pull in. I can't make it myself." Dixon owned some dredgers at the Port of Stockton. He come down and pulled me in. Were we hungry! We got up to Stockton and we were hungry, boy.

McGil: We used to go in that restaurant up there.

I remember the time we were towing the dredger down the river and I was steering the boat and they'd come out in the boat and take us back in the dredger to eat while we were running. And I saw the pig on the bank, running on the bank, and I saw them go ashore from the dredger. Because the dredge tows slow. It's a big dredge. And they took the pig and put him aboard. That was in the morning. And then when it come time for lunch, I don't know, they come out from the skiff and took you back for lunch and I run the boat. And then I went back there and I said, "What have you got?" And they said, "We got the pig that we caught." I said, "I don't want no lunch."

Figari: I had a deaf and dumb kid as a deck hand for me, Willie Fonseca.

McGil: Oh yeah, we called him "Dummy."

Figari: Dummy. He was deaf and dumb. But if anything would go wrong with that engine, pound or anything, he could hear it and he'd take care of the engine. And when I wanted to get something to eat I used to stop the boat and let the boat drift back and I'd jump on the dredger and he'd go ahead with the tug. He could run the boat as good as I could. Then the captain of the dredger used to go on with him. Then when I got finished eating he used to back up and go and eat. And that kid, that youngster, used to run the boat as good--I don't know, he was about 17, I guess, and he was deaf and dumb. But he could take care of that engine and run the boat.

McGil: Oh I used to like him as a deck hand. I got used to talking to him with my fingers and I learned it pretty good.

Figari: Yeah, I used to, too.

McGil: There was only one time that we were coming from Sonoma and I gave him the sign to let the tow line go and put it over on one side so the water from my propellor would go alongside and the barge wouldn't pile up ahead and stick me in the mud--it was shallow water--and I backed up and put him aboard the barge and then he gave me the sign that it was all right, and I went ahead and he let both lines go. My tug went one direction and the barge went in the other direction. He made a mistake giving the hand signals.

Figari: He was deaf and dumb, but he was a good deck hand.

Teiser: Did he stay with the organization?

Figari: Oh yeah, for a long time. Then he went stevedoring. I don't know whether he's still stevedoring. I don't think so.

Teiser: I think you've talked about a lot of people who stayed with Mr. Crowley. Was there a turnover?

Figari: Oh yeah, he had a big turnover.

McGil: If you weren't good he'd let you go and he didn't like a person that didn't tell the truth or tell lies and things like that. You know there was a fellow one time--we used to run the papers to Oakland after the fire, because they printed them over here, but Oakland didn't print any papers. And I used to run the papers and Willie used to run papers . . .

Figari: I didn't run papers; my brother did.

McGil: Didn't you run papers?

Figari: My brother ran them.

McGil: I first ran the papers at two o'clock in the morning after the San Francisco fire had stopped because the papers would come down and we'd load them on top of the house in a pile and load up big bundles of papers for the different places. And we'd take them over to Oakland. (They discontinued printing papers in San Francisco during the fire and for some time after.) Then some of the drunks would come down--after the last ferry boat and they'd go down in the launch and sleep. They had a good place down there. And we'd go over to Oakland. You know, Congo King, he used to be over on Pacific Street--in the Barbary Coast.

Figari: King was his name.

McGil: His name was King, but they called him "Congo King." I was taking over the first load; Congo was taking the second load. And Congo brought down a lot of girls from up in the Barbary Coast, you know, the young girls.

Figari: He was a bouncer there.

McGil: And we got over there to Oakland and there's all the little carts

McGil: with the wagons and horses and everything--Fruitvale, Oakland, and everything--and we'd throw the bundles up on the dock. I got up on top of the house and started throwing bundles. Congo said, "Don't throw the bundles, let the women throw the bundles." The girls threw the bundles up on the dock and we didn't do any work at all. But all those women played up to him. He was kind of a king up there on the Barbary Coast. He was a tough guy. He carried a gun and everything and he used to stop rows and fights up there on the Coast, and you had to be tough because the Barbary Coast was tough. But he worked for Crowley. He'd come down there and run the papers over to Oakland, you know, or something like that. And then I remember I went over there one morning and there were three boats running papers--two came behind me--but I was on the regular paper run and it was pretty thick fog and we had to go up Oakland Creek, you know.

Figari: That's the Estuary.

McGil: And, boy, I missed the creek and went in the mud. And I got stuck in the mud. And the other two boats came right behind me because they thought I knew the course good and they got stuck in the mud, too. The three of us with all the papers and everything. People didn't get their papers until about noontime. So there was hell a popping there.

The story I was gonna tell you on that I thought was a very funny one. There was a fellow, Paul Paulson his name was, you remember, and he had the Guide and he took the papers over one morning. We worked pretty hard, we were working all night and everything and he had a long watch. And he was coming back from Oakland and in the middle of the Bay he dozed off and went to sleep. Of course, he had a big heavy duty launch and everything, and he went sound asleep. And all of a sudden he hit a ship in the Bay, bang, right into the ship.

Figari: That was the transport Crook.

McGil: The transport Crook, see, so he got out and got outside. It didn't break the boat too much, and the fellow looked over the rail, the watchman, and Paul hollered up at him. He said, "Where the hell are you going?" The watchman on the Crook said, "Where am I going? We've been anchored here for two years." [Laughter.] That was kind of embarrassing. So he come in and Crowley said, "What happened to you?" He said, "I was behind the engine fixing the generator. And she sheared into the ship and hooked the ship, hooked the transport Crook." You can't blame Paulson after working 24 hours. [Laughter.] So that was a hot one.

McGil: I had one like that, too.

Figari: After the Spanish-American War, the transport Crook used to run soldiers.

McGil: I come over one time to pick Bob Farrell up--after running papers up at Munder's ways. And I went to sleep when we got out of Oakland Creek. I don't know how my boat missed all the ships in the Bay, but there were quite a few ships--the Alcoa and all those ships anchored up there. I missed all the ships while I was sound asleep. I had a toothache and I fell asleep. I went along and all of a sudden a lot of water splashed in my face. It seems I went up in behind Hunter's Point and my boat ran in the mud there, and as it did all the water ran forward in the tug's bilge and the fly wheel of the engine picked it up and hit me in the face. I looked up and I saw where I come from Oakland Creek, and I was miles from my dock where I should have gone. How I got through all the ships and missed them I don't know. That was another one.

Teiser: Did you say Munder's ways?

Figari: Munder's--in Butchertown near Hunter's Point.

McGil: That's where Jack London fixed his Snark up there. I helped him fix it up.

Teiser: Did you really? Did you know him?

McGil: Yeah. I had lots of drinks with him.

Teiser: What was he like?

McGil: Oh, he was a good fellow. He was all right. He was over at Glen Ellen and I used to go over and see him at Glen Ellen and go in a bar and drink there at nighttime.

Anyway, the Comet, and there was a fellow named--I don't remember his name, maybe you can--but this Comet was a pretty heavy duty launch. He had a lot of cement at the bottom of it, do you remember? This is a very serious thing. He came down from the river after working long hours. He was going at a pretty good clip. And the Key Route . . . do you know anything about the Key Route that used to be there?

Teiser: No.

McGil: Well, it was new then and everything. And he went to sleep and he went right plank into the Key Route pier and when he went

McGil: into the pier he went under the pier and he spread the tracks, lifted the tracks up. He was kind of a cowardly fellow, I guess, but he got up on the pier, stopped his engine, left the boat there, went down to the ferry building there, [to] the Key Route boat, and he took the first boat, the six o'clock boat and went over to San Francisco and left his boat there. A train came along with about 600 passengers going to work. And the engineer was smart. I mean, had good eyes I guess. He saw the tracks didn't look right. So he put on the emergency brakes and he just stopped in time or the whole train would have gone in the Bay. So the tracks were all crooked and spread, see. So, anyway, the fellow didn't come back. That was the end of him. I think you know his name. He was a skinny fellow. But he didn't come back for his pay or anything for a long, long time. I don't know how Mr. Crowley fixed it up or was sued or if anything happened. But the fellow then one day did come in a year afterwards and said, "Mr. Crowley you owe me some pay." And Crowley said, "You get the hell out of here or I'll break your damn neck. You don't have a nickel coming and if you don't get out of here right now I'll break your neck." And that was the last we saw of him.

Figari: A skinny fellow?

McGil: A skinny fellow, yeah, I forget his name now--but he was along the time of Barney Madden and those fellows.

Figari: We had "Balky Dan," you remember.

Teiser: Why did you call him Balky Dan?

Figari: [Laughter.] It was just kind of a nickname. Dan Fitzgerald was his name.

McGil: That's right. This fellow had a short name.

Figari: We had a big turnover down there. We had a fellow by the name of Blackenridge. Seaborne--do you remember Seaborne?

McGil: Yes, Seaborne, he run the Comet. He was a Mare Island pilot.

Figari: He went back to Texas. He married some girl whose folks hit oil back there or something.

Teiser: About 1923, when you left here, how many people were there in each of the two organizations--the Red Stack and Crowley?

McGil: I don't know, let's see. We used to have large crews in those times. I had a boat down there that had six men on it.

Teiser: How big a boat was that?

McGil: It wasn't a very big boat either, that was the Pilot. She was 87 feet or something, a steamboat.

Teiser: Why so many men.

McGil: Well, men were cheap in those days. We had myself, then I had a cook and we had two deck hands, and I had a deck boy and a fireman and an engineer on the boat.

Teiser: This is down at San Pedro?

McGil: Yeah, I had it down there, too, when I first come down--'til we changed to diesel. When we changed to diesel we automated things; they handled it in the pilot house. You don't need an engineer, just like an automobile.

Teiser: How many people were there altogether, do you think, in the organization when you left?

McGil: You mean this Red Stacks or Crowley Tug?

Teiser: Well, each of them.

McGil: Well, let's see, I think they had about 60 men down there at the Red Stacks.

Figari: Crowley had just about five men in the office, Miss Carey . . .

McGil: Well, and the boats, too. Say they had 50 men here at Crowley Company.

Figari: I don't think they had that many. They had about 30 or 35.

McGil: You mean with the launch fellows and all?

Figari: Yeah.

McGil: That's right; we used to run the boats by ourselves.

Figari: You'd run the boats; you had nobody but a deck hand with you.

Teiser: Thirty or 35 at Crowley and about 60 at Red Stack. So it was a pretty big organization.

McGil: Oh yes, it was. He started out with Whitehall boats, you know. We had a picnic park over there, El Campo; we used to run picnics on Sunday, you know. I can tell a little joke on that, too. [Laughter.]

Figari: Paradise Park.

McGil: There was a fellow there, that fellow that played the accordion--Les Salisbury--he used to play out in Ocean Beach out in San Francisco, and I got him a job playing accordion over in the park for the dance. And he'd come over there and play the accordion. He was only a young fellow.

But we used to have a lot of fun. We carried 250 passengers at a time going over and then they had a dance hall over there and they had the hills and it was a beautiful place. Of course we drank a lot of beer, all of us, and this time coming back, Les was down below. He was feeling pretty good. He'd been playing the accordion and mixing it with the beer and everything else. So, coming back, [Ernest] Tanner, who ran the park, had a case of beer in the pilot house, with that other fellow that used to be with him--

Figari: Scotty.

McGil: Scotty--and we were drinking a bottle of beer or two and I had about 250 passengers on the boat. But this fellow Les went down to the engine room and he kept calling me up on the tube, on the speaking tube, and using a little profanity. And people out on the deck could hear it. But they all were kind of stewed up, so it didn't make much difference. So I said, what am I gonna do with that guy? He was down in the engine room. There was no engineer down there. So I took a bottle of beer and I took the cap off it, and I poured it in the speaking tube and I blew it. [Laughter.] And I looked back and I saw him come up out of the companionway and he had beer all over his suit and everything else. [Laughter.] I really hit the spot and that stopped him.

Figari: We had that--what was that Admiral Evans' fleet come around--was it the White Fleet?

McGil: White Fleet--

Teiser: The Great White Fleet, was that it?

Figari: The Great White Fleet. Oh, we had the Tugs #6, #7, and we had the Tug #5. He sent all the boats down to Santa Cruz to meet the fleet, to run people out to the fleet down there.

[Looking at photograph.]

McGil: Oh this is that picture of the [Crowley] family . . . I thought I loaned it to you. I took it out of the frame that I had at home. This is the stepfather. Of course everybody don't know that. But this is Mr. Tom Crowley, who's 93 now, and his name was Banning. His father's name was Banning. Now this is Mr. Crowley, this here. And this is Dave Crowley and that's Jack Crowley, stepbrothers.

Teiser: When did Dave and Jack Crowley die? How long ago?

McGil: Dave not so long ago, about four or five years ago.

Figari: Dave died about four or five years ago and Jack died about eight years ago.

Teiser: Were they active until their deaths?

McGil: Oh yes. Dave belonged to the Olympic Club; he was quite an athletic fellow. He and I used to go out to Golden Gate Park and wrestle in the grass out there.

Figari: Remember the race we had down at the fairgrounds?

McGil: Oh gad, yes. [Laughter.] That was something.

Figari: The 1915 Fair?

McGil: Oh yeah; you won it! [Laughter.] Because you had short legs you got a handicap.

Figari: I didn't get a handicap at all. Dave Crowley said, "We're going to have a race." They had a race track there, you know, and he said, "Whoever comes in number one gets three days off, the second man gets two days off, and the third man gets one." I won three and you were behind me. [Laughter.]

McGil: That was the day Dave was full of fun. But Mr. Crowley raised hell with him. This is another picture of Tom, a little older, you can see he's quite a determined fellow.

Teiser: Tom Crowley raised hell with Dave?

McGil: Oh yeah, but if somebody picked on Dave he'd fight him. He was a little fellow, but he'd fight anybody.

Teiser: Was there a lot of fighting? Did you all have to be able to take care of yourselves?

McGil: Well, yes we did, but some of us didn't--like Willie and I--we never looked for a fight, never wanted to get into it and kind of kept out of it--didn't we, Willie, more or less?

Figari: Yeah.

Teiser: But did the two other Crowley men fight a good deal?--Dave and . . .

McGil: No, Dave and Jack didn't. They got along pretty good together.

Teiser: I mean, did they fight with other people?

McGil: No, they didn't. The only thing is they didn't tend to business at times. Tom was all business. The father was just like Dave more or less; I mean, Dave Crowley, Sr. The fact is I had him once deck hand with me on the boat around the fairgrounds and so forth. I used to let him just sit around, because he was a nice old fellow. And Dave used to say, "Put him to work. Make him work." He was a pretty nice sort of fellow.

Teiser: You took him out in your earliest days, Captain Figari, didn't you?

Figari: We used to go out to the ships in a 28-foot boat. We used to go out to the sailing ships. We used to work for the butcher, Al Meyer, as I told you. Sometimes Jim Sinnott would go out. We had opposition from the Ferry Market. Jim Sinnott worked as an all-around man. He hired a boat from Tucker and we had to keep our fingers crossed with the lightship. And he always told me, "Keep wiggling and keep the wind on the side of your cheek." We used to go out in a thick fog, out to the lightship. I'll never forget, we were going out, and we ran into a big four-masted ship. I'll never forget the name of it, the Dumferline. She was just wallowing around there. Mr. Crowley said, "We're going to go and get your pilot." And he told him how to steer. [Laughter.] He said to me after he left, "How the hell is he going to steer?" He didn't know winds, he was just laying there. So we went to the outside [pilot] boat to get a pilot. The pilot's name was [Mitchell] Tyson; I don't know if you remember Tyson.

McGil: Yeah.

Figari: And Captain Tyson took so long getting dressed and everything that the inside boat grabbed him and took him in. The pilot was [Stephen] Castle. It was thick fog and just about an hour afterwards the fog just cleared up. And who came up but the Sea Queen.

Then, Mr. Crowley, the old man, used to work for Albert Meyer, and then Fink ran the Ferry Market. And he bought the Comet and the Meteor.

Teiser: Thomas Crowley bought the Meteor and the Comet from Fink?

Figari: From Fink the butcher. Then he sold them all.

On Strike, Railroading and Jack London

Teiser: How did you know Jack London? Let me ask you about that now.

McGil: Well, they had a strike at Crowley's--I've been here all my life at Crowley's--but they had a strike and we used to go up to the union meetings and they would talk . . .

Teiser: When was that, about?

McGil: Oh that was way back in--oh gosh, that was before 1915--1912 or 1911 or something.

Teiser: What was it about?

McGil: They had the strike because they wanted more money and so forth.

Teiser: Who struck?

McGil: The launchmen struck. And you remember at that time, Willie, then they put the scabs on, put the fellows on.

Teiser: What union was it?

McGil: Oh, it was--what did they call it in those days?

Figari: Marine Engineers, wasn't it?

McGil: Marine Engineers, right. They had a little button with Marine Engineers on it. I was on the boats at that time. We liked the

McGil: Crowley family, Willie and I, but we didn't like the ideas that they had to beat up fellows that were gonna take our places and break windows in the launches and different things. So, anyway, when I was a kid I always liked railroading. I wanted to go railroading. So I got me a friend that got me on the Northwest Pacific Railroad, as a fireman. I wanted to get on an engine. I just loved steam engines, you know. So, the first thing they sent me up to Glen Ellen. They told me to stay up there, and there was a day freight that came in there, and when it came in in the afternoon, to take charge of the engine and bring it up and fill it with water, clean it up, and fill the lights, and different things. That was my job. Then it went out at nighttime again. So it was there all day.*

Anyway, Jack London lived just up on the hill then, right there in Glen Ellen. There was what they call a Frenchman's Bar there--a saloon. So at nighttime when I used to take the engine and bring it down--the funny part of it is I had to come out of the roundhouse, Will, you know, and went to the turntable and I had to balance it on the turntable, because I had to push it around myself. There was a resort right there or something and there were a lot of young girls there, and I used to get them out to help me push the engine around. [Laughter.] And we used to have a lot of fun.

Figari: He was always after the girls.

McGil: I was always after girls. Then I'd let them ride in the engine with me. I'd go down; I had to switch back on the track and then go down to the depot. And I'd put the engine in front of the depot. About four o'clock the engineer would come out and those fellows, and they'd take the train over. And they'd be gone all night. They'd go down to Tiburon; they took a big freight train over there. And they wouldn't come back until the next day. All right. I lived at the hotel there. And downstairs was the bar. And Jack London was in there every night. There's the point! I'd be at the bar having a drink--in those days I drank too. Jack would be there and he had on a big kind of a straw hat, sombrero-like. And he'd come down there and he'd buy us all a drink and we'd talk and everything. We had lots of fun talking about boats. Because he was on our Red Stack tug Sea Witch for a while, as a deck hand.

Teiser: Oh, he was!

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* See also pp. ff.

McGil: Yeah, he was on the old Sea Witch.

Teiser: That was the one that went down, was it?

McGil: No, that wasn't the one; that was the Sea Eagle. So, one night I took Jack--he was feeling pretty bad, so the bartender, a Frenchman [said to] help Jack up the hill, up home, because he's liable to fall down. So I took him by the arm and I don't know which one of us was most inebriated, but I helped him and he helped me and I got him up on the hill and got him in the house. So that was that. Then, later on we were talking of Munder's ways. I was out there with a boat, one of our boats, Crowley boats, and he had the Snark out there. And the Snark was right alongside of one of our boats, one of our open boats. So,gee whiz, he was surprised to see me. So, anyway, he says "Come aboard and look at the boat." And I'll never forget. He had a Twentieth Century engine in it. Did you ever hear of that before?

Figari: No.

McGil: It was a gas engine. He had a nice new engine, and it was a good engine. He was going to make that trip and he was telling me all about it. While I had the boat over there I used to go over there every day and I'd help him, too. I was there the day that he said he was gonna start the engine. And he had a machinist out there. And he started the engine and boy, the crank--one of the cranks--let go and it went right through the crankcase and smashed the crankcase. And, oh, was he disgusted! So that was the end of that engine. They had to send a new engine in. By that time, of course, I was back and working out at Howard Street, and I had never seen him since that until they were going to make a picture one time [after London's death]. His wife called me up and wanted me to come down. We made a picture at the dock on the tug. So I got the tugboat on it. That girl, I can't think of her name now, played a part. Anyway, we made one of his pictures there and his wife was there and everything.

Teiser: That was Charmian, was it?

McGil: I don't remember; I think so. That girl's name who was the leading lady, I can't think of her name either, a very beautiful woman. Nevertheless we made the picture and that was the last of Jack London as far as that goes.

Teiser: Did either of you know him when he was working on the Sea Witch?

McGil: No, that was before my time. They told me about it. The Sea Witch was built in 1887 and it was the boat that took Jim Corbett to fight that man up at Benicia.

Figari: Choynski.

McGil: Choynski, that's it. He fought [Joe] Choynski on a barge up there. He went up on the old Sea Witch.

Figari: We used to have a lot of movie people here, you know, Valentino, Dorothy Dalton, for pictures here.

McGil: Dorothy Dalton, I talked to her by the hour.

Teiser: They'd make them with your boats?

McGil: Yeah, they used to make them on our boats, the sailing ships and everything.

Figari: Sailing ships, and schooners or something towing them around.

The Jinxed Sea Prince

McGil: There's one story here, Bill, that's a very tragic thing. The Sea Prince was a steam tug out somewheres around 75 feet.

Figari: Louis Langdon?

McGil: Yeah. And Captain Louis Langdon was captain of it. I was at the Red Stacks at the time. He brought a ship named the Graystone Castle down from up river and he piloted the ship down like we always did. When he got out to Alcatraz Island he said goodbye to the captain of the ship and he went down on his tug, down a rope ladder, onto the steam tug. There were five men on the steam tug besides him. As he started out, he was kind of a daring fellow, he went around the bow of the Graystone Castle and she was picking up headway and he didn't realize it and she ran over him. And the tug went under the ship and it rolled a number of times over like this and Langdon was in the pilot house. The way he tells us, he put his feet against one side of the door--he's a big tall fellow almost seven feet, and he put his feet against the door and his hands against the other door of the pilot house, to keep it closed, and he saw daylight, but he didn't see a chance to get out, and it rolled under again and he saw daylight again and he opened the door

McGil: and he came to the surface. And the tug sank off Alcatraz and the other five men drowned. So he told the story about it. So anyway, the Sea Prince was always called a jinx boat. Billy Stophen broke his leg on her first. She was down at the bottom of Alcatraz. Then World War I came along and she'd been down there about two years and they said we need another boat, let's go get the Sea Prince. So they went out there and they get her out of the deep again, and they got the boiler going and put her to work, and she was all right. So she was running and everything was fine. So, I get her down to San Pedro and she run in front of an oil tanker down there and the oil tanker ran over her again and Captain [Jans] Holland was on there and he floated out on top of the water. And he went in the smokestack because the water ran in the smokestack and took him in too. This was about two a.m., but he got out of the smokestack. So the fellows on the boat all went overboard and they were safe, and they took them out and picked them up and put them on the battleship. There was a battleship in the harbor and they took them and put them in the sick bay. About two a.m. I went out to the battleship and I went in to see how they were getting along and they were all in the bunk and they were taking care of them and fixing them up. [Laughter.] This is the funny part of the story. There was a Mexican on there that was a deck hand--Oscar Viscaras--he was a deck hand and he was missing. So they didn't know what became of Oscar. "We got everybody but Oscar. He's missing. What became of him?" So up on the dock, the ship docked in the dock there without a tug, at the Union Oil dock, and they heard somebody hollering down below, and he hollers "Stop that propellor, it's throwing water in my face." [Laughter.] He was sitting on the rudder, hanging on the rudder of the ship. Every time the propellor would go ahead, it almost drowned him with water--backing and filling. So they stopped the propellor and they got Oscar out. He's still alive today. That was a jinx again.

Then she went up in the West Basin, the same boat--

Teiser: Where's the West Basin?

McGil: In San Pedro. And she was alongside an oil tanker there. And the oil overflowed over the deck. That was that Associated Oil tanker. And the oil went down the smokestack of the Sea Prince and started a fire. And she started to burn and the oil was all over the water, burning, and the engineer jumped overboard and he swallowed some of the oil and fire and he died. And we lost the engineer and saved the rest of the crew. She was only a skeleton then, the house. So I built her up again, built the

McGil: house up again, we got the boiler going again, so we got the Sea Prince going again. Then she was up in the West Basin and she was alongside of a ship and the ship got too close to a sandbank there and she went high and dry on the sand bank and laid over on her side there in a sand bank. Boy, I tried to get her off; we couldn't pull her off. We had to get Smith-Rice's derrick barge to pull--to lift her up and pull her off. So we got her off and got her back again. So we had her at the dock. We painted her up. And she had about seven lives, you know, so she just went along.

She went along pretty good and then this fellow [Juan] Perlo came from Mexico and he wanted to buy a boat. So I says, how about taking this Sea Prince? [Laughter.] I had enough of the Sea Prince. He says, "She's a pretty fine boat." I said, "Yes, I'll sell her to you." I gave him a price. And I sold him the boat. Tom says, "All right, sell her, as long as he takes her to Mexico and don't run opposition to us." I said, "We'll put her under a Mexican flag right away." We put her under Mexican flag. He started out and he had everything aboard and so forth, and a fellow come up to him and said, "How about insuring the boat for the trip?" He said, "I don't want any insurance, I'm only going down to Mazatlan with her. She can make that. I don't want to pay for insurance." "For $150 I'll insure you for the trip." "No." They were speaking Spanish. So after a while he said, "All right, I'll insure $150." So he insured the boat. Two days afterwards, I called him up and said, "Perlo, how did the boat make out down there?" He says, "She ran on the rocks and she's a total loss." They put the crew in jail. She ran on the rocks down in Mexico. That ended the old Sea Prince.

Figari: Is Perlo still around?

McGil: Oh yeah. He bought another boat from us, the Navigator, the electric boat I bought in Honolulu, when I went over there.

Figari: Oh yeah.

Long Tows

Teiser: This reminds me of something that someone asked me about--in the early '20s they said, one of the Crowley companies, I don't know which one, had a contract to go down to Santa Rosalia, off

Teiser: off Baja, and bring back some German sailing ships. What's the story about it?

Figari: There were several ships that were interned down at Santa Rosalia. They towed them up here. Rolph bought a couple. I think they named them the Annie M. Reed, and the Missoula; all those German ships were interned.

McGil: Mayor Rolph was in the tugboat business.

Teiser: Someone said Dollar was too.

McGil: Oh yeah.

Teiser: What did you do? Did you tow them back up?

Figari: Yeah, towed them.

Teiser: I see. How come? Why couldn't they sail up?

Figari: They had no crew and it's cheaper to tow them up.

McGil: It's a hard job sailing against the wind and it's cheaper to tow them up. You can tow it up quickly.

Figari: Those German sailing ships were interned down there, and after World War I people up here bought them.

Teiser: Is it hard to tow a sailing ship?

McGil: No, they tow along pretty good because they have no propellor on them.

I towed a sailing ship to sea one time for the Alaska Packers. And I towed them pretty well out. I had the Sea Eagle, that's that one that sunk. I towed them pretty well out to sea and I let them go and blew them three whistles goodbye. The next day I had one of the Peterson ships to tow out, one of those wooden ships, the Errand I think it was. I towed that out. Peterson was kind of a cheap fellow and he rode with me in the pilot house. And he said, "Give me a good tow out. I only paid for a tow to the lightship. But take me well out to give me a good start for Alaska to catch up with those ships." "Well," I said, "I'll tow you out past the lightship." That was on a Sunday. And after I got out to the lightship I saw the mast of a ship. He said, "Oh boy, there's another ship for you to tow in. Now you might as well keep on towing until you get out there and then you can tow him in. Look at all the money you'll make."

McGil: I said, "All right." So I kept on towing because I was making seven or so, seven or eight, and I got out there and I let him go and I hauled in the hawser and I went over to the ship. Here was the ship I took out three days before, and I says, "Hello captain, what happened?" I went up on the quarter there. He says, "I'll tell you. After you let me go, the wind went down, and when the wind went down there was a big sea and I got in the trough of the sea and I got rolling and I rolled out the topmast out of her, and the foremast broke off and I sent a man aloft to make things faster and he went overboard and he was drowned, and I'm in a bad fix." He says, "I want a tow back again." He was going to Alaska. He had all the cannery hands aboard. So I towed her back to San Francisco. But you were asking the question, is it hard to tow a sailing ship? All right, I towed him back to San Francisco and so they said, "The hell with putting in a mast and everything; we're gonna lose a lot of time." So one of the Red Stacks towed them all the way to Alaska with the broken mast to make up lost time. That was a long tow. But they caught up with the other ships. They put a good big tug on them, the Sea Rover, or one of them, and pulled her up there to Alaska and then she made sail up there while they were taking fish aboard or something, and she came back herself somehow.

Teiser: Was that unusual to be tugged that far?

McGil: That was a long tow. One long tow back in 1912 was when our tug Hercules towed the Hocks to the Panama Canal. But they make long tows these times.

Teiser: Did you do a lot of coastwise towing?

McGil: Yes they did a lot. They used to tow oil barges on the coast, the Roderick Dhu and the Phelps, you remember, and all those oil barges. They'd tow up and down the coast.

Figari: They used to tow piling down, log rafts, just built like a cigar.

Teiser: In the ocean?

Figari: They used to tow it down from Portland. How long did it take them to tow those logs?

McGil: Oh those log rafts were terrible. They had so many million feet of lumber in them, they are cigar-shaped, you know, and they'd tow them down the river from Portland with the river steamers and then our tug would take a hold of them and they'd tow them down. Well, they were hard to manage. And if they started to head for Honolulu you had to head for Honolulu with them. You couldn't guide them

McGil: because they'd go their own way. You had to keep trying to coax them back. But they'd turn and you had to coax them and coax them until they got going straight. And for three or four hours they'd go straight for San Diego and then they'd decide to go to Honolulu again and you had to go with them. If you didn't you'd be in irons; your tug would be way over on her side and you'd be in a terrible fix. [Laughter.]

Teiser: Just one tug at a time?

McGil: One tug, and he towed him all the way down.

Figari: They used to catch afire too, from the friction.

McGil: They'd rub together and they'd catch afire.

Figari: They'd send a tug up to Point Reyes or something to play a hose on them. They were piling all chained up. They used to take two down to San Diego and one or two in San Francisco here, the Hammond Lumber Company. They had piling and poles and everything like that.

McGil: They put a deck load of lumber on some of them on top.

Figari: And the friction would cause fires. A Boy Scout was down there, I guess.

McGil: [Laughter.] Yes. That was quite a thing, towing those log rafts. Can you imagine going two miles an hour all the way? Imagine you were walking all the way from Portland. You can walk faster than two miles an hour, down to San Diego.

Teiser: They gave you groceries for that trip, didn't they?

McGil: Oh yeah. That was the Red Stacks. They had cooks, you know.

Teiser: How many men on one of those?

McGil: They had quite a few men. When the Sea Eagle was lost she had 17 men on her.

Figari: The Sea Eagle had 17.

McGil: She towed up the coast; she had 17 men.

Teiser: What were the cooks like? Were they pretty good cooks?

McGil: Well, they used to cook cockroaches and everything. [Laughter.] They didn't mind what they cooked. They weren't too clean, you know, and so forth. We used to have a lot of trouble with them sometimes. They'd have a pipe and juice would drop off the pipe into the soup.

Teiser: Did they have Chinese cooks?

Figari: No, they were all Swedes.

McGil: Oh, some of them were pretty good. They cooked pretty good. One cook was the father of Barry Nelson, the movie star.

Tom Crowley

Teiser: Let's go back to the Crowley family. Tom Crowley, Senior, seems not to be like any of the others. I mean, he was always on his own.

McGil: He was an individual. He was different. These three fellows, you see, were very much alike. But Tom Sr. was all business, a very smart man--with little schooling, but very smart--he was terrific. He had an answer for everything. It's like he'd be down in my place and they'd call for tugs. We wouldn't have tugs and he'd say, "Mac, you tell them you don't take them off the shelf, you know." Things like that.

Figari: He always said, "Never tell them you haven't got a boat. Tell them you've got a boat. Never turn them down." [Laughter.]

McGil: Yeah. If you did damage to a ship, he'd tell the guy, "We don't insure your ship, we only tow it. So we're not gonna pay for the damage." But he had the answers for everything. But he was a fellow who didn't want people to think he ever had money or anything like that. I bought a new car down there in San Pedro. I'd buy a car whenever I needed it and charged it to the company. I had a new car. And we were out looking to see the customers down there [San Pedro] and I said, "I got a new car, Tom." And he said, "Oh, is this a new one?" I said, "Yeah, and you paid for it." Then we went to see a customer and he said, "Mac, leave the car down at the corner. If they see that car they'll think we have money." [Laughter.] That's the way he was.

Teiser: Well, he must have dealt fairly all these years with shipowners.

McGil: Oh yeah. He was exceptional.

Figari: He was well liked. Of course, he had, for instance, Peterson Company, who were opposition, and they had a lot of tie-ins with the Union Iron Works and [B. F.] Mackall and several others. Remember the fence we had between the two boat houses?

Teiser: Between which boat houses?

Figari: Between Peterson boat house and our office down there. They had a fence at Pier 14. Peterson was over at 16 and we were at 14. Mr. Crowley got the Harbor Commission to put a fence up [Laughter.] so that when people walked into our place they couldn't go through. (Laughter.] And how they fought that fence! About a year afterwards he said, "Well, we'll take a piece of the end of the fence off so that people can walk around."

McGil: I remember Peterson once said to Tom Crowley, "Tom, you're nothing but a rat." And Crowley said, "You're such a big rat you can put a saddle on you." [Laughter.]

Figari: He was very well liked, Mr. Crowley, you know.

McGil: He bought Peterson out.

Figari: Yeah--Oakland Launch took the Peterson Company over. But before that the Peterson Company was at Folsom Street. And Mrs. Peterson sued for divorce and she had the business. She never made any money and I believe she asked Tom if he wanted to buy the boats, the Sibyl, the William B, and they had the Puss and another one that I forget.

McGil: The Recruit.

Figari: No, the Recruit was Billy Clark down on Vallejo Street.

McGil: Yeah, Billy Clark.

Figari: Henry Peterson's wife took over the business. And they also had a fellow by the name of Henry Thiemann. He's still alive, and he's in a convalescent home. He got a stroke, lost his wife. And his son is the rental man at the Harbor Commission down there. Anyhow, he managed the place, and Mrs. Peterson wasn't making money or something, and Mr. Crowley got I think it was Ernest Tanner to buy the place. Mr. Crowley, as I say, bought the place.

Then they started Henry Peterson in the business [again]. Henry Peterson was quite a drinker, see. Then this fellow got [Joseph J.] Tynan and [W. Leslie] Comyn of Comyn, Mackall [& Company] and Friedman of the bank and, oh, there was a lot of shipowners went in it, you know, and they weren't friends of Crowley. They

Figari: thought Crowley was making a lot of money, why can't we go and buck him, see? They called it the Henry C. Peterson Company, see, and they had several managers there. But they mismanaged it. Then Rollie Harris and his brother of the American Dredging Company bought out the Henry C. Peterson Company and named it the Harbor Tug and Barge Company. And then the Harbor Tug and Barge Company, they had it for quite a while, and they had a pretty good contract up around the river. In the summertime they would go up and haul beets from all around the rivers and take [them] into Tracy. I can't think of the name of the beet company in Tracy now.

Teiser: Spreckels?

Figari: No, Spreckels was down at Salinas and we worked for Spreckels up at Walnut Grove. I can't think of the name. I think Harbor Tug still hauls beets for them. But that's about the only contract they had to make money. But they had a fellow by the name of Williams, Al Williams. . . .

Teiser: Albert Williams?

Figari: Yeah, and he was managing the Harbor Tug and Barge Company when they consolidated. But, as I say, he did a lot of cheap work and we didn't ever know how he got by doing it. They had a big elaborate office over at Alameda and a garden there and a big office upstairs. I know when Mr. Crowley was going to take it over, we went over there to look at the place, and Harris wanted to get out, so he sold out to Mr. Crowley. So that's the story of the Harbor Tug and Barge Company.

McGil: Remember one time he [Crowley] used to give us $15 a week and he'd give us a $10 gold piece and a $5 gold piece and he put them in little envelopes. And I said to Tom one time, "Do you want me to sign for this, Tom?" and he said, "No, I don't want you to sign for it because you won't get it again anyway." [Laughter.]

Figari: They had $20 gold pieces and $10--they had a little $2.50 one, too.

Teiser: How do you account for the fact that all these other people went out of business or disappeared and . . .

McGil: Well, Tom worked hard all the time and the other ones didn't.

Figari: Tom Crowley worked hard. You take the first competitor--Billy Clark--he had an office alongside of us. We used to call them

Figari: boathouses then. And [Crowley] he'd go out and fight with the agents uptown. There was a fellow by the name of Mr. Henry who had charge of the French ships that come here; Mr. Crowley would do all the business. He used to go up to see Mr. Henry and get all the French ships. But a lot of Frenchmen would have their crew row them ashore.

McGil: But Tom was the first one to go uptown and see the big businessmen. And the other fellows didn't. They stayed down on the waterfront.

Teiser: So that's one reason anyway.

McGil: Yeah. that's a good reason. He joined the Olympic Club and all that and got in with all the fellows up there.

Figari: And Charlie Cattermole got sore; Tom got all the German ships. He got Billy Gately and Jackie Lee. They built those two little boats, the Amelia and I forget the other one. They didn't last long. You were there when Gately used to have those little . . . [Laughter.]

McGil: Oh yeah.

Figari: You'd get in the boats and you'd almost sink.

McGil: Well, Gately used to drink so much and he used to go up to the Barbary Coast and everything. Then he'd sleep at Crowley's there. Crowley let him stay there and he'd give him business.

Figari: But he was a regular go-getter. Tom went uptown.

Teiser: Maybe he was the first of the people on the waterfront who really thought in terms of more than an individual roughneck business.

McGil: Oh yes, that's what he was. He joined these clubs right away. He belonged to that other club where he used to go up to the country there.

Figari: The Bohemian Club.

McGil: Yeah, and he got in with all those fellows--the shipping people--because he was a very aggressive sort of fellow and he figured there's nobody any better than he was. And he didn't give a damn for anybody, that's the way he felt. But these other fellows were more meek. They stayed down on the docks and "come down and give us business" you know. There was Johnson, he had launches, you know, and those fellows--Harry Johnson--they never left the waterfront. They never had been up Market Street.

Figari: Well, they never mingled with the big shots uptown.

McGil: But Tom got in with all the big shots.

Figari: That's why he was very successful.

McGil: And he was a smart man. I remember one of his first successful deals. The Standard Oil Company wanted to get an engine for a ship. Very few know about this, but he told me about it himself. They wanted to get an engine, and he knew where there was an engine in Europe, a diesel engine. He got the engine for about $150,000 and he told the Standard Oil Company he had a good engine for them. And they said, "Yes, what kind of an engine?" "Well, it's a so-and-so kind and this and that," and "That's what we want for our ship." He says, "I'll sell it to you for $850,000." That's the kind of a fellow he was. He wasn't afraid. They said, "Good, that's fine." And they gave him a check for the whole thing. He says, you go get it yourself over in Europe, and everything. And that was one of the things where he made some money right off the reel.

Then the Bank of America went broke* and he lost quite a few dollars. Now [A. P.] Giannini was a good friend of his. He said, "Tom, don't draw any money you have in there out because the thing won't go broke." And it did go broke and he lost--how much did he lose?

Figari: I don't know. He had a lot of stock. It was the Bank of Italy at that time.

Teiser: It was the Bank of Italy stock that went down, wasn't it? The depositors didn't lose anything, according to my understanding.

McGil: Yeah, it went right out of business, the Bank of Italy, and then it changed its name to the Bank of America later. But he lost cash, too. They had $75,000 or something that he lost in there. That hurt him quite a bit. Money was hard to get in those days.

Figari: He was a director of the Bank of Italy.

McGil: He always wanted you to know the value of money, but he knew how to make money himself. He was a good man.

Figari: Yes. He always fought for everything he got.

McGil: Oh yes, he fought hard.

Teiser: He had a variety of different enterprises, didn't he? Why did he

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* It did not go broke. Its stock dropped in value. The operation was continuous, but the name was changed in 1930.

Teiser: go into the shipyards?

Figari: That's right. Well, to repair his own boats. Over in Oakland.

McGil: You see he gets in with people. For instance, they're gonna build the Key Route. Somebody said to him they're gonna build that Key Route [pier] for so many miles out in the water. We have to get all that rock. Now Tom he got together with Daniel's quarry and he said, "Let us build the thing up. I'll do the towing, we'll get the barges. We'll build the barges, we'll do the towing and everything." We towed all those barges down. I did the towing myself. We took them down there and dumped them in there for that fill. Rock.

Teiser: Where was the quarry?

McGil: Up at McNear's Point.

I just thought of a good joke about McNear's Point. I was up there with a rock barge once and there was another fellow up there with me, a deck hand, who was quite a kidder, and Jim Sinnott was up there--I don't know why he was up there--but we had a rock barge. One was loaded with skips, high skips, you know; all the big rocks. Then they had explosions in there, blasting the rock out and everything. So this fellow said to Jim--he was standing on the outside of the barge--he said, "They just blew the whisles, they're gonna blast. Look out because when they blast the rock flies up in the air and it's liable to hit you in the head." So Jim ducked over behind the boxes on the barge, and the blast went off. And this fellow on the barge picked up a big rock and threw it just off Jim's head and hit the water with a splash and Jim said, "My God, look at that, I could have gotten killed." [Laughter.] I thought that was very funny. He threw it just past his head and it went in the water with a big splash. It would have killed him, if it had come from the blast at the quarry instead of from the skip on the barge.

Teiser: When did Mr. Crowley get into the shipbuilding business? When did he get his first shipyard?

Figari: I guess that was about 1924 or something like that.

Teiser: You had just left then, Captain McGillivray?

Figari: Oh, it was before that. I guess--I know 1915 he didn't have a shipyard--I guess it was about 1919. Crowley Shipyards they used to call it. He used to repair his own boats.

McGil: Now Merritt Shipbuilding. He was going to buy a boat one time, too, he was very sharp--I think I told you about this one over at Craig Shipyard, didn't I? They had a tug which Crowley would like to get out of the way anyway. It might be in competition to us and everything. And Craig built this new tug. It was a pretty nice looking tug. But it had a little bit too much free board and Crowley didn't like that too much.

Teiser: Too much what?

McGil: Free board; it had high sides. From the waterline to the main deck.

Figari: It was too high in the water.

McGil: Craig was well fixed over in Long Beach; they had oil wells and shipyards and everything. He said, "What do you want for that boat?" Mr. Craig said, "Mr. Crowley, I'll sell the boat for $175,000." Crowley said, "You would?" "Yes," Craig said. "How much would you give me for it?" Crowley said, "I'll give you $18,000 for it." Craig says, "$18,000! Mr. Crowley!" He said, "Listen, if you're going to be ridiculous one way I'm going to be ridiculous the other." [Laughter.]

Teiser: How much did he buy it for?

McGil: [Laughter.] So they split the price.

Teiser: That was another way of gaining ascendancy over your competition, buying their boats?

McGil: Yes. Tom was smart in that too.

Figari: He bought a lot of boats and sold them. He was very fair though. He bought boats for W. R. Grace Steamship Company. They were sent to the west coast of South America, Peru, and down there. The company ships would ship them down there for Grace Line. [And] He built boats and sold them to Grace. The ships used to lay out in the roadstead, and they built coffee barges. And all boats down there used to have to be copper sheathed, otherwise the worms would eat right into the wood. A fellow by the name of Twigg* out here used to build a lot of the coffee barges.

McGil: To use to move coffee from shore to ship in stream. Twigg and what was the other fellow in Oakland?

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* John Twigg and Sons.

Figari: Cryer, Bill.

McGil: Yeah, Cryer, and the fellow that built the yachts, too.

Figari: Frank Stone.

McGil: Say, I saw Christy Machine Works when I went by coming up. They put the boiler--they must be the grandchildren of the original owners--they put the boiler and engine in the Sea Prince and all those old boats.

Figari: They were put in down at the Fulton Iron Works, where the Marina is now.

McGil: They built the Restless down there at the Fulton Iron Works.

Figari: The Restless and the Sea Lark and the Sea Bark, all built down there by Stone.

McGil: He built the Picket there at the same time.

Figari: The Fulton Iron Works were there and they used to put the boilers into the steam schooners that were towed down from the coast.

McGil: That puts me in mind of Crowley buying the #19 back. We owned her once and we sold her, but she came up for sale down in San Pedro. There was Merritt and Chapman down there. He didn't want them to buy the boat. And he went in there and we talked over the table. We talked about different things, but he said, "That boat that's for sale we owned once. I built that boat. But she never was worth a damn." He wanted Merritt & Chapman not to put in a bid. He said, "That boat, we had her down the fairgrounds. She was good for carrying passengers, but that's all she was good for." And he gave Merritt and Chapman an awful sad talk, and anyway we got the boat. We got her back again. And it was a year or so afterwards--we went into Merritt and Chapman and they had a lot of barge work around the harbor--he said, "I want to tell you something, we got a damn good boat there, that Crowley #19. She can tow barges and she's one of the best boats." Merritt and Chapman said, "Listen, I wish I had a tape or a record of what you said before when you bid that boat in. You told me the boat was no good." [Laughter.] I'll never forget that.

Figari: They changed the name, I don't remember from what.

McGil: Oh yeah, she was called something else when I had her at the fairgrounds.

Figari: At the fairgrounds she was the #19. We had the #19, the #20, the #21.

McGil: I brought her down from San Francisco to San Pedro and I sold her. I sold her to Harbor Department, then I took her over to Catalina.

Figari: Yeah. The #21--Charley Fitts and I took the #21 down to San Pedro.

"All Kinds of Characters"

McGil: I come down with #19--this is a funny thing though--I left SF with that boat. She was like a big launch, you know. We had a gasoline stove in the pilot house. I got off the coast down below SF and the gasoline stove caught afire and it was all afire in the pilot house. Louie Cadano was with me. And Louie took a pike pole and he reached in the pilot house and he pulled it out--it was all burning up--the gas stove--and he threw it overboard. We had all the food, but we didn't have any stove.

We had a skiff there and it had some sand in it and we had a fire bucket, and we put the salt water in the fire bucket and put in the beans and the stew, put everything in and made a great big stew in the fire bucket, until we got down to San Pedro. This Louie Cadano used to go upriver with me, but he never had been to sea. So we go down to San Pedro and it was kind of foggy. Up in the river, it's all tules, you know. And I go down there and all of a sudden I was in there rather close, I guess; there was a lot of kelp there, and Louie was out in the bow there and he hollered, "Tules ahead." He never had seen kelp in his life. But he was a little bit kind of funny, this Louie was, but he was a good boatman. Anyway we had some money to spend in LA after we left the boat, so we went to LA. We went up to the hotel, and on the way down on the #19 we were standing four-hour watches at the wheel. Louie says, "Well, Mac, we got that money, we're in this room here, let's stand four-hour watches in case somebody comes in." I said, "Okay, you stand the first watch, but wake me up when the four hours is up." So I went to sleep.

And then we went up on the train the next night and he'd never been on a train overnight. We went up on the Lark and he saw the hammock there where you put your clothes. He said, "Where

McGil: do you sleep, in the hammock or the bed?" I said, "You can't sleep in the hammock. You put your clothes in the hammock. You sleep in the bunk. I'll take the top bunk." So I got in the top bunk and in a little while Louie got all excited and jumped out of the bunk and run down the train. He come back, I said, "What's the matter?" He said, "That colored fellow just come up and stole my shoes." "Oh," I said, "he's taking them back to polish them so they'll be shined up in the morning, Louie." [Laughter.] He said, "I gave them hell and I took them back again."

Figari: Remember Beau, the colored fellow we used to have for a deck hand?

McGil: Yeah, he used to do the soft shoe dance for us. [Laughter.]

Figari: I remember when it rained he used to say, "It's a dark and stormy night and the rain is falling fast, Bill Bailey told his lady friend the dream of love has passed." [Laughter.] I'll never forget that. He used to work as a deck hand, then he used to hit the road. "When she blows two snorts she's on her way." The trains. We had all kinds of characters working for us.

Teiser: Let me ask you one thing. What were your regular working clothes?

Figari: A pair of jeans.

McGil: Jeans and a black shirt.

Figari: A pair of boots and an oilskin when it was raining.

Teiser: Sweaters? Coats? Wool jackets?

McGil: When it was cold, yeah, we wore jackets.

Teiser: Black jeans and black shirts?

McGil: Yeah.

Teiser: Hats?

McGil: Oh, we'd wear a cap.

Figari: Mr. Crowley bought some caps and he had a gold crown with CAPTAIN on it--Balky Dan, McGinnis, and there was another one who used to go up the Barbary coast--CAPTAIN! [Laughter.]

Teiser: This was for the boats that went to the fairgrounds?

Figari: No, no, no, this was for the small launches.

McGil: When we were at the fairgrounds, we had CAPTAIN on our hat.

Figari: Yeah. I'll never forget, that fellow McGinnis--I went up--uh--he worked for the Standard American Dredging Company and he and Eddie Poole were going up when they built the Southern Pacific Railroad bridge in South Bay--they were going up to get a dredger--the Carson--up at the Grant Line Canal. That's up at Old River and Middle River and all through there. This fellow Eddie Poole had a girl friend at Walnut Grove. He said to McGinnis, "When we go to Walnut Grove I want to go up and see . . ." (I forget what her name was.) Something happened to the engine, they broke down or something. So they called Tom and asked could we send a boat up to get the dredger Carson. So they sent me up in the Comet to Grant Line Canal. We got the dredger and took it down Middle River. I'll never forget the mosquitoes. Gosh, I took a towel and wrapped it around my head and still I couldn't get rid of them. You could hear them. They were buzzing. We stopped at Middle River and changed our dredger bucket, see. So then we went to the mouth--at Schultz's Landing--to the mouth of the Tater Slough*--and there [were] McGinnis and the Scanlon (the name of the boat was) with Poole on it. So we went on the dredger to get something to eat and McGinnis--I always accuse McGinnis--he took a bolt and threw it in the clutch of the Comet.

McGil: And ruined your clutch.

Figari: Yeah. I started her up and I could hear the grinding, so I stopped her quick. So we were supposed to tow the dredger just to Antioch, and a Red Stack was coming up to Antioch to take her down to the bridge site down there, the Dumbarton Bridge. So what I did, I took--uh--threw the clutch in and started the engine. We put a line on the dredger and off we went. And you could hear that bolt rolling around in the clutch. So McGinnis said, "We'll tow you down to SF." I said, "You're not going to tow me to SF, I'm gonna run down." He said, "You're liable to ruin--pull all the gears out of the clutch." So I delivered the dredger to the Red Stacks at Antioch. And I ran all the way down to San Francisco. And Henry Pitch took that clutch apart and that bolt in there was no bolt out of the clutch. I always accuse that fellow McGinnis of throwing that bolt in my clutch.

McGil: Oh, they used to do that.

Figari: I just threw the clutch in and started the engine in gear.

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* Potato Slough

Family and Boyhood

Teiser: You said your father was an early graduate of the University of California and went to Alaska?

McGil: Yes. In that gold rush.

Teiser: How come? Tell about him.

McGil: Well, I didn't know too much about him. Now Mr. Crowley more or less raised me. But what I'm getting at--as far as my father goes, my father and mother were separated, as Catholics don't get divorces, and then there was my sister and myself, and then father went to the Klondike. He went to school over there in Berkeley and I know that--it was a funny thing--he had a medal for pulling a boat in Lake Merritt, you know, with the crew, and everything. I don't know what he got the medal for--being one of the winning crews or something. And I took it to school. He was William McGillivray, too, and I'm William James McGillivray. I took it to school and I lost it someplace in the school yard. My mother spanked the dickens out of me for it. But then he graduated from Berkeley, and it seems that he got out just when the gold rush started. And getting out at that time was the right time, so he thought, "Well, I'll go up there."

Teiser: He was a mining engineer, you said.

McGil: Yes, a mining engineer, and he knew the game. He knew placer mining and the different mining--the different ways of mining. I don't know anything about mining. So he went up there and went over the '98 Trail, and so forth. Here's the way it happened. He was a pretty smart fellow--too bad I didn't have his picture here. Oh, you'd see him with a plug hat and a cane, you know--he was a very classy fellow. But nevertheless he went up there and he come back and he had quite a bit of money. The fact is, people have said he was one of the richest men that came back then. Now, he come back and he went up to Auburn, California, and down the American River. He opened up a mine there and did some placer mining; then he washed down the banks and things and got gold up there, and everything. And there was a hotel up there at Auburn, called the Freeman Hotel, at the railroad station. And the man there--when I went up there years ago he was 82 years old--and he says, "I remember your father well, and your mother used to come up here and they'd dance out here at night, on that platform. We had it all lighted up, and everything. She used to come up and see him once in a while. But your father, he would go to Reno, or up to those places,

McGil: and play the roulette wheel, and it was nothing to drop a thousand or two thousand dollars in a night, see?"

Now that's the way it was, but my mother, of course, in staying with him and everything, and so forth, and he felt very badly about losing my mother, more or less. And I didn't see much of him. And then he came down one time to San Francisco to see us. And my grandmother and my mother would call him "McGillivray," see? And he'd come down there to see me, too. And I was a boy, of course, and I said, "Hello, McGillivray." I was only a little kid, see? And he took offense to that, too. And he says, "Even my son don't even know his father." So he went back up to Auburn again, and so forth, and he died up there in 1923.

A peculiar thing happened. My aunt went up to live in Auburn, and my cousin and I were riding on a bicycle. And I never knew where my father was buried. And we rode through the cemetery and I got off the bike at a certain place and there was his name on the grave. That was a funny thing. And I said to my aunt, "Was my father buried here?" "Yes. His grave is up there." And I said, "I just happened to look and I saw the name."

He had two brothers here in San Francisco and they were in the stone business, and they all did well on the McGillivray's side of the family.

My grandfather, on the other side, he came from New Hampshire, and down in the [San Francisco Maritime] museum you might see where I gave some pictures there, and some writings and things of his. He come around in a ship called The Regulus, it was a sailing ship. He come around the Horn. But you could see it down in the museum there. There is an account of his voyage there. I sent it to them because they asked me if I would, and I had it home.

Teiser: What was his name?

McGil: His name was Bufford, Lawrence Bufford. He came around the Horn, and he was quite a one for drawing. He could draw very well--he never took any lessons. And on the way up he drew Sugar Loaf and all the different places coming up the coast, and then wrote the date, you know--1847, 1848, and all that, you know. So anyway he come around on the ship and he had all these drawings, and he kept a log of the ship there, and so they have them up there under the showcase there. You can see it when you go in there.

Teiser: Did that interest you as a kid?

McGil: Yes, it did. He'd tell the stories about those people that would die, they'd put them overboard, and things like that.

Teiser: Did you ever think that you would be spending your life with the boats?

McGil: I liked boats from the start. Well, to go on with that--I think that that would come in right here where I say [referring to his notes] "I was born in the Western Addition."

Teiser: Yes. When were you born?

McGil: I was born on February 23, 1891. I'll be 80 years old next February. I'm pretty old. They say, "What do you attribute it to?" I always say, "Wine, women and song." That's all I can say. [Laughter.]

Teiser: It must work. [Laughter.]

McGil: I've been with the company here sixty-five years. I'm ashamed of myself, staying with them so long.

Teiser: Do you think you're in a rut? [Laughter.]

McGil: I think so. I said to Mr. Crowley last time I was up to San Francisco, "I would like to take it easy." He says, "Listen, Mac, you go down and go fishing, and you don't need to come near the office, because we have another young fellow down there. You don't have to do a darn thing." I said, "The fishing is bad; I'll have to go to Crowley Lake." He said, "Well you go down there and just take it easy, and take a trip." So I said, "Well, I'm going to take a trip." I went around the Horn. I went around down on the Lurline, and everything. I was gone fifty-four days.

Teiser: But he didn't want you to retire?

McGil: I said, "But listen, you're paying me a salary, and these other fellows down here are getting paid too in the office, and you are just too kind." "Now," Tom said, "listen, that's my business, and not yours." I said, "All right, I'll shut up." [Laughter.] So every month I get a check, and everything; and whether I'm there or not, it doesn't make any difference.

Teiser: What's your title down there--what are you called?

McGil: I was the manager--what they call manager--of the Crowley Launch and Tugboat Company down there--it's the San Pedro Tugboat Company, subsidiary of the Crowley Launch and Tugboat Company of San Francisco.

Teiser: Doing business as . . .

McGil: Doing business as the San Pedro Tugboat Company, yes. And I started, of course, up here on the boats in San Francisco.

Teiser: Now I've led you astray. We were starting back with your childhood. You were born there in the Western Addition. What street was it?

McGil: Scott and Eddy, and I was baptized in the Holy Cross Church at Scott and Eddy. I was up there the other day and I went in and said a prayer for Mr. Crowley, Senior, before I went to the N. Gray place.* Now, the N. Gray Mortuary place was over on Post and Divisadero, and that was about three blocks from the church, and about three blocks from where I was born. And they asked me here, they said, "Are you going to the funeral up here in San Francisco?" I said, "Yes." They said, "Do you know where N. Gray is?" I said, "Do I know? My grandmother was buried from there. I ought to know." So anyway, that was it, my neighborhood.

So I was born up there. And then I went to the Golden Gate primary school, right up on Golden Gate Avenue. And down the street from there there was Lloyd What-his-name that's on the television there with the negro lady Julia--Lloyd Nolan--the actor. I understood that his dad owned the Nolan Shoe Company.

Then I went to the Hamilton grammar school where my sister went, and I got up to the seventh grade in the Hamilton grammar school--that's over on Scott and Geary--and the fire** came along.

Teiser: How old were you?

McGil: Going on to fifteen, then.

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* Thomas Crowley died August 5, 1970.

** 1906.

The 1906 Earthquake and Fire

Teiser: Do you remember that morning?

McGil: Of the fire and the earthquake? Oh yes. We lived at that time on Turk and Pierce. That's about three blocks from where I was born. And I slept in the room with my grandfather. My grandfather--he was the one that came around the Horn--and he was a veterinarian and used to take care of horses and things like that. And of course the house started to roll and rock and I jumped up and I looked across the street and I saw all the houses hitting their heads together--those old-time ornate houses, you know. And everything all shook so much. And our beds went out into the middle of the room--they walked out, you know. [Laughter.] And I ran to the door to open the door--of course, an old house, you know--went to open the door and the door was jammed and I couldn't come out and I guess the good Lord was good to me, because alongside of the house there was another house with a big chimney--about a ton of bricks, you know, on that chimney, and it slid off the roof down onto our front stairs where I would have been running out, and they just literally caved in all the front stairs, see? They might have landed on my head. But I couldn't get out of my room as the bedroom door had jammed. Later on I did get out, and of course my cousin and I went downtown running around. And my family told us to get out to Golden Gate Park. Our place didn't burn down, you know.

So they got out there and we found we were located out in Golden Gate Park--had a tent out there and everything. My grandfather was out there and all of them--my grandmother, and my mother.

Teiser: How long did you live in that tent?

McGil: Well, I was going to tell you--I ran away from it, myself and my cousin, and we come down and we saw the buildings downtown burning. We saw a bell fall out of a church that was burning and it rang all the way down until it struck the ground, and we saw the fire coming out of the Call Building--I don't know whether you remember the Call Building there on Kearny there. All the streets were all torn up. And we got down to the waterfront climbing over the bricks, and we saw ships pumping water, trying to get water uptown to put the fires out, and then on the way down we went down Polk Street. You see, I was supposed to go to Lowell High School when I got out of school, down on

McGil: Geary Street. That was where I was going. My folks wanted me to be a lawyer or doctor, or something like that. They didn't want me to run around and be a sailor or something. But I didn't like that. I liked either to be a railroad man or work around boats--some physical sort of work.

So we went down Geary Street, not far from the school, and I saw the school burning, see? And of course that put an end to my school education. But I saw it burning. And there was a store right over here--they took all the jewelry out--it was a jewelry store, but there were some of these big clocks that they put up on a shelf and a lot of things, and there was a man standing there with a gun--National Guard. And my cousin says to me, "Look at the clocks! The fire's getting so bad now, these windows are going to break pretty soon"--all those houses were afire right down there, half a block away, and those nice clocks right there and nobody around, no on-lookers. And I said to my cousin, "We ought to kick the window in and maybe take a clock or something." And he said, "Yes, we'll do that." And then there were two other fellows came along and had the same idea, and they went ahead of us, and they kicked the windows in and took a clock--and this guard turned around and shot both of them and they both fell right down in the street. Just think of that! And we were so scared, you know!

So we went back up on Van Ness Avenue, and they were dynamiting houses up there, to knock them down so the fire wouldn't get across the street, and there was a place there where they had motorcycles--brand new motorcycles--and a big crowd along the street watching the fire. And the owner says, "Say, people, come in and take these motorcycles--you might as well take them--they're gonna burn up anyway." And there was a guard standing there with a gun and another one here, and I looked at the guard and my cousin looked at him, and he looked at us, and he didn't say yes, no or go, and I says to my cousin, "No, don't go. We'll get shot, sure." And a lot of people did go and they come out with the motorcycles and nobody said anything to them! [Laughter.] In those days I'd'a sure liked to've had a motorcycle, at that age, see? So that was all right, but in the other place they shot them. So it was lucky it wasn't us. The guards were there to stop the looting.

So that brings me up to that date, then. My folks said, "When they re-build the school, we want you to go back to school and get some education--send you to college like your father." And I said, "All right." But everything was disrupted in the fire, and everything was going to pieces--all

McGil: the buildings. Most of the buildings were all of brick, you know, and the brick all fell down. Today I don't think you'd have that trouble.

So I went down to the waterfront, myself. I walked along the waterfront. And I see this man loading furniture in a launch to take to Oakland, and it was Mr. Crowley, see? And his place on Filbert Street was going to be burned. That was all burned out, see? So they had all the furniture, and they had taken it to Oakland.

Teiser: His home, this is? His home on Filbert street?

McGil: Yes. His home was going to be burned out. So he had it, and he says, "Hey, kid! Give me a hand, here," like that. And I says, "All right, mister." And I got in and I give him a hand and we went over to Oakland with a big load of furniture. I don't remember too much about it, outside of putting it on the dock in Oakland, but I think somebody was over there to receive it, and so forth. But you know, in those days of the fire you couldn't come back to San Francisco if you went to Oakland. They wanted to get everybody out of the city on account of the looting and things, see? So we were over there and people come to us in the boat and said, "Say, we'd like to get over to San Francisco; we'll pay you anything." And Crowley was quite a business man then, I guess, but he said, "All right. Give us a few dollars apiece and we'll take you over." So he took a load of passengers over for two dollars apiece, see? It used to be a nickel on the ferryboat, see? [Laughter.] He collected the money, and he didn't give me a cent. I helped him let go the lines and everything. We come back. And he says, "Say, kid, let's go back and get another load." And we went back and we got another load at two dollars apiece. We could get all we could take aboard. So we come back. And I got to bed that night--oh, I went out to the park, that's it. I found my folks. "Where you been?" Well, I told them my experiences. "You shouldn't do that," and so forth. "Well, all right." But I thought to myself, gee, that fellow down there, and he had those launches, and they fascinated me quite a bit, so after things calm down a little, I'll go down there.

Well, before the bricks got cold there I was back down there again. And I says, "You got a job for me, mister?" And I saw the name Crowley there on a boathouse and there was another launch company called Peterson. And I says, "Crowley--that sounds like me. You see, I'm Irish, and he's a Catholic, I guess, and that Swede, you know, Peterson--I'd better go to

Some of the tugs that sailed the San Francisco Bay
after the fire & earthquake in 1906

		Built
Side wheeler	Tug "Tiger" towed rockbarges from Mc Near's Point	
Steamtug	"Crolona" Towed waterbarge for American Sugar Ref.	1898
Steamtug	"Wizzart" Early day Red Stack Tug	
Steamtug	"Union" Union Iron Works (owners)	1899
Gas Tugs	Nos I & 2 Risdon Iron Works (Owners)	1901
Steamtug	"Ida Warren" Healy Tibbets dock builders	
Steamtug	"Ida W" private owner	1889
Steamtug	"Transit" Union Oil Company	
Steamtug	"Rover" Associated Oil Company	1901
Steamtug	"Navigater" Large two stack tug.Associated Oil Co	
Steamtug	"Rival" Souther Pacific Co Small towed mud barges	1869
Steamtug	"Ajax" Large tug acted as fire boat for S.P. CO	
Steamtug	"Fox" private owner	1901
Steamtug	"Amalie" 45 feet in length Owner Wilder	
Steamtug	"Elizebeth" American and Kelly Dredging Companies.	1890
Steamtug	"Arabs" Pacific Mail and Associated Oil Companies	1904
Steamtug	"Water Nymph" Harvey & Roberts Water deliveries	1881
Steamtug	"Govenor Markam" Towed State mud barges	1892
Steamtug	"Govenor Irwin" Towed State mud barges (old)	1878
Steam Army Tug	"Slocum" Did Army work (coal burner)	
Steamtug	"Golden Gate U.S.Customhouse tug	
Steamtug	"Argonaut" Quarantine tug Berth at Meigg's Wharf	
--------	Steamtugs at Shipowners & Merchant Tugboat Co -----	
Steamtug	" Chief"	1907
"	"Pilot"	1903
"	"Tatoosh"	1900
"	"Gleaner"	1908
"	"Defiance"	----
"	"Storm King"	1919
"	"Restless"	1907
"	"Sea Queen"	1888
"	"Sea Lark"	1905
"	"Sea Rover"	1902
"	"Liberty" old	-----
"	"Sea Wolf"	1869
"	"Richmond" formerly Santa Fe Tug	1900
"	"Fearless"	1899
"	"Rescue" Very old	----
"	"Standard No I"	1913
"	"Sea Eagle" formerly S.P.R.R.Co	-----
"	" Sea King"	1883
"	"Elue" formerly matson Honolulu	----
"	"Sea Prince"	1901
"	"Sea Fox"	1902
"	"Reliance"	----
"	"Sea Witch"	1883
"	"Relief"	1884
"	"Sea Lion	1921
"	"Sea Monarch"	1921
"	" Hercules"	1907
"	"Goliah"	1907

Over

			Built
Steamtug	"Alert		1885
"	"Monarch"	very old tug.	18--
"	"Dauntless"		-----
"	"Sea Ranger "		1921
"	"Sea Scout "		1921
"	" Sea Salvor "		1904

Copy sent S.F.Marine Museum

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McGil: to see Crowley." Peterson had launches, too.

So I said to him, "Have you got a job for me? I was the fellow that helped you over there." He never gave me a nickel in all the money he collected! [Laughter.] And he says, "All right. You come down tomorrow--" and so forth and so on.

Learning to Work on the Tugboats

McGil: Well, I got down there and he started me off at five dollars a week, and I was loading freight and all kinds of things on barges, and working hard. I could work hard, and I really worked hard. I took stores out to ships, and I rode along as deck hand and everything, and after a while he let me run a launch, a small launch, called the Spy, and he gave me $7.50 a week, see? And I run that boat for a long time. And then I said to him, "Tom, you're giving me $7.50 a week, and that fellow runs a boat just like mine, over there, and you pay him $8.50 a week." "Well," he says, "$7.50 is all you're going to get, because if I give you more you'll only spend it on wine and women anyway." [Laughter.] See? What can I do with an extra dollar? You know, to spend on wine and women!

So anyway, I run the small boat, and I worked on that for a while, and then I got on a little larger boat. I was running the papers to Oakland. After the fire they printed the papers here and took them over to Oakland, you know. And at two o'clock in the morning I'd start out with a load of papers, and they'd pile them on top of the deck house of the launch (there's a picture of the launch downstairs in Crowley's office) and we'd take papers over to Oakland. And then we'd throw them off, and there used to be a lot of people come with carts--one-horse carts --Elmhurst, Fruitvale--all different ones, and the bundles all had their names on, where they go. And those people would--I'd holler "Fruitvale," and I'd throw them on the dock. And those fellows would take the papers and put them in their carts, and drive away. They'd have a lantern hanging underneath there. No automobiles in those days.

So I run the boat nighttimes for a long time, and then I got on a boat called the Warrior, daytimes.

Teiser: What did your family think of all this?

McGil: Well, they said it's all right. But when the schools go back, you're going back to school. I said, "All right, but I'm making

McGil: money now, and that's the first time I ever made money." Because I used to get twenty-five cents for delivering circulars--that's all the money I made. Except, you know who used to give me twenty-five cents too? For sweeping out his theater? "Sid Grauman." I'll tell you a funny thing about Sid Grauman. You know, before the fire they had a show downtown, on Market street. If you know the Grauman's in Hollywood, you know who Sid Grauman is. And they got burned out down there [downtown] in San Francisco, so they come out in my district, and they started a little theater called the National Theatre, and they had moving pictures and things, and illustrated songs, and things like that. And Sid stood at the door, only a young fellow--I remember he used to wear a vest, and he had that bushy hair, and his father--would you believe it? He was an Irishman he told me. And Sid Grauman was Jewish, you know. Their mother was Jewish. And they lived across the street from the National Theatre in a flat, and I was looking at the flat the other day--how dilapidated it is. Negroes live there now, see? But they lived in a flat across the street, and his father had a red complexion, a moustache. And he wore a dicer hat, and he was typical Irish looking. And his mother was Jewish, of course. That's where he got that Jewish look about him.

Teiser: Was his father named Grauman?

McGil: Yes. I don't know how it was Grauman--that don't sound like Irish. But anyway, that's what they told me. I didn't ask him personally, of course, but they said he was Irish. I said he looked Irish.

So I'd go in and sweep out the theater after the show. Or some of us kids--other fellows. And Sid would give us twenty-five cents for sweeping out. You know they used to have candy bars and things in back of the seats where you'd drop a nickel and take the bar out, and they'd throw the stuff all over the floor. So we'd have to sweep it out.

So that was the early days of making money.

Teiser: So five dollars a week didn't look bad.

McGil: And then the five dollars a week--that was quite a fortune. In those days, of course, things were cheap.

Teiser: What was the scope of Mr. Crowley's operations at that time? What kind of work were his boats doing on the Bay?

McGil: Well, he had launches. I guess you read about them with the whitehall boats, I won't go into that.

Teiser: This was after whitehalls?

McGil: Oh, yes. This was after. No, I've seen the whitehalls, but I--But Crowley had launches. He used to go out to the ships with the whitehall boats and get these orders--meat orders. There was a butcher. I think his name was Finke--I don't know, whether that was the right name, or not. But he used to get the meat orders for them and we used to bring men ashore in the whitehall boats, and then Mr. Finke said, "Crowley, as long as you're doing that, what you ought to have is a gasoline launch." And so Crowley says, "All right." So Finke bought the launch, and then later on Crowley bought the launch, and that--

Teiser: From Finke? Crowley bought it from Finke?

McGil: Yes. He took it over. And he says, "I'll handle the launch business, you handle the meat business. And I'll go out and get your stuff for you."

Teiser: By the time you started working for him, then, he was still provisioning ships that way, too?

McGil: Let's see, now. When I started working for Crowley he had about five launches. He had the Comet, the Meteor, let's see--he had about five launches, and we towed barges. He'd take captains out to ships, and everything, with the small launches, and the bigger ones we towed barges in and we'd load steel on the barges. He had a couple of barges, and we'd load steel and take it to Oakland, and things like that. And we'd take stores out to a ship--a big load of stores. That's where I came in sometimes, hustling all these barrels and things down in the boat--barrels of oil and ice and everything else. And I'd go out to the ship all by myself with the launch, and then I'd hook them on and then they'd haul them up on the ship with the winch, and everything.

And then he got to towing dredges up the Sacramento River, and all that. And sometimes we'd leave the dock maybe at nine o'clock at night, and we wouldn't be back for a week, you know. We'd tow these dredges up in the Sacramento and all around the river. We used to like that. There was no overtime, or anything. And we took along with us food for the duration of the trip. We'd go up to the store and buy things.

McGil: I went deck hand with Willie on some of them there. Figari was before my time. And we'd cook beans and coffee. We didn't know how to cook very much, but we had cans of beans and coffee and bread, and we'd live on that for a week, you know. And we thought it was fine, see?

Teiser: Kind of like going camping?

McGil: Yes. Going camping. And then Will'd buy some cigars, and he'd give me a cigar and tell me when to smoke it, and all that. [Laughter.] He used to call me "Kid," too. Yes, I'd say, "Can I smoke the cigar now, Willie?" "No, wait til after awhile," see? [Laughter.]

Teiser: Is he a year older than you are?

McGil: Oh, he's about four years older than I am.

Teiser: When you were kids that age, that was a lot of difference, wasn't it?

McGil: Oh, yes. I had to do what Willie said, and he was a good boatman, you know. I guess I told you about when we went in a bar to get a drink?* Well, that's how long I've known him.

But anyway, Crowley had about five launches, and we went out and took stores, and different things. And then, in 1915, the Fair came along.

Teiser: Wait a minute. Before you get to 1915--in 1913 you went and did something else for a while?

McGil: Oh, yes. That's right.

Further Recollections of Railroading

McGil: I tell you, when I was a kid I always was crazy on railroad trains or boats, see? They had a strike, Crowley did, in that time on these launches. And Mr. Crowley--he was a pretty tough sort of a fellow, and in those days they used to try to break the strike with what they call strike-breakers or scabs, they used to call them, and all that. So they did get some fellows that had run boats, and we went out--our union pulled

* See also pp. 6-7.

McGil: us off.*

Teiser: You were loyal to your union at that time.

McGil: Well, I had to be, you see, because they'd beat you up, or something. They were pretty mean, you know.

Teiser: Yes. What union was it you were in?

McGil: That was--let's see--the Marine Engineers Association, they called it. It's changed today. But anyway the union decided to strike him. And then I went up to some of the meetings sometimes, and I was very loyal to Crowley 'cause he was awfully nice to me, you know, and he sort of raised me when my father wasn't around, you know. And if I didn't come down and go to work, he'd call my grandmother up and say, "Send him down. If he don't come down I'll come up after him." That's the way he was, so I had to go. Grandma would say I was lazy more or less. "Mr. Crowley wants you down there." Well, I says, "Yes, I'm getting sick of him," but I had to go down. Tom said I had to go, so I had to go. Underneath I thought the world of Tom Crowley. He was my benefactor.

Anyway, as far as the railroad goes, the fellows up at the union talked about going down and throwing rocks through the windows on the launches and destroying things, and beating these fellows up when they got off work, and all that. And I was between two fires, you know. I thought, "I don't want to do anything against Crowley." I knew a fellow here on the Belt Railroad--used to run an engine out here--a fellow named Jack Kinsner, who's a good friend of mine. He used to come down the front there and ride on the boat sometimes. I said, "Jack, could you get me a job on a railroad?" And he said, "I think I could, maybe." But he says, "Come down here and ride on the Belt Railroad with us down here and learn how to fire a locomotive." Which I did. I rode around with a fellow, an awfully nice engineer, and the fellow that was fireman was a nice fellow. And I used to come down the Embarcadero at nighttimes to the Harbor Belt RR and ride up and down the Waterfront over at the boxcars and things. And then he got me a job over at the Southern Pacific, and I got working as a fireman on the Southern Pacific, and they sent me down to Watsonville, and I was in the yard over here at Third and Townsend, and all kinds of different places. And I stayed on there for--

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* See also pp. 39-40.

Teiser: Did you have to join their union?

McGil: No. I would have if I stayed--if I stayed over a year. But I stayed eight months with them. But, gee, it was a hard job, you know. It wasn't like the boats--you could lay down and take a sleep in the boats in the afternoon. But we used to come down, sometimes, on a night-run, at five o'clock at night and work 'til eight o'clock in the morning, and we never stopped once. Just at midnight we'd come in and take water, and then we just push box cars all night long. And then the engineer used to get tired and sleepy, and he'd put me over and I'd have to run the engine, you know, or something. I liked that.

Of course there was a funny thing about that, one time. There was an engine come in with about one hundred cars, and they come into the train yard, and we were supposed to switch-out the hundred cars. I said, "Gee, that's a big job." Gee, I'd go out, and I'd turn on the cold water at the tank car and throw it in my face to keep myself awake, and the engineer said, "You get over here and pull out that hundred cars." And I got over on the right hand side. And then I had, of course, to get them started, I had to watch my operation, the wheels and everything, to get the engine to pull them without pulling out draw bars and things. It was difficult to get the load started. And I got it going, and geez, the engine was just blowing her stack off--I had an awful load. And the engineer went to sleep! And I went to sleep--that's the funny part of it. [Laughter.] And anyway I was hanging out the window and this chug-chug-chug-chug going along, with all these hundred cars, and I went out through the tunnel out there--that Bayshore Tunnel, with all these cars, and all of a sudden I woke up, and I looked back, and the brakeman was giving me what you call a "washout--stop her," you know. He was swinging the lantern. "The washout--Oh God!" I thought, "Boy, I run 'way past the switch, a long ways out." And then I backed up, and we switched out the cars, and at midnight that night that brakeman--that conductor--he says, "Say, what the hell was going on up in that engine?" I said, "We both fell asleep--couldn't keep awake." He says, "I thought you were going down to San Jose!"

Teiser: Did you work at Glen Ellen during this period?

McGil: I worked there on the Northwestern Pacific and then transferred to the S.P. I stayed on there for eight months on the S.P. and I liked it all right, but I got two bits an hour--that wasn't very much money, and we worked twelve hours a day, and twelve hours at night and no stop, you know. And I thought, "Boy, I'd like to get back in those boats."

McGil: So all of a sudden they stopped it, and they threw all of those strike-breakers out, you see? Well, all right--I went down.

Back to Crowley

McGil: I remember Tom, Sr., coming down, and I was outside the boathouse. I thought, "Boy, I've got to see him, because I don't want to stay railroading." Because, by the way, I talked to a fellow who was an engineer, and he said, "Yes. If you stay here about five years, you'll get a steady night job, and then if you stay another five years you'll be extra on freights running down the coast." I says, "Oh, boy! Five years and I get a steady night job! I'm tired of the night job already." So I thought, "I want to get back on the boats so I can get some place."

So Tom come down, and I said, "Tom--did you have anything? Gosh, I've been working over on the railroad." "Oh," he says, "did you get your belly full of that damn railroadin'?" That's the way he put it. And then he sent me over to Oakland, to Alameda, to pick up a boat that they were building there. I got that boat, and I brought it across the Bay, and it was brand new, and it was all full of chips and everything and the wood chips got into the gasoline tank, and out in the middle of the Bay the engine stopped about three times, and the ferry boats were going by, and I was rolling and I was blowing in the gasoline pipe. I had my stomach full of gasoline and everything, blowing. I had to clean out the pipes to make it back to San Francisco. And I got it back over to San Francisco. So then, that was that period.

Then, of course, I worked on the heavier-duty gasoline boats, and then the fair come along.

Teiser: Let me ask you about that boat that you were just describing. By that time, was Mr. Crowley having boats built for him?

McGil: Oh, yes. He was building them all the time.

Teiser: Where was that one built?

McGil: Over in Oakland. A fellow named [William] Cryer built that one.

Teiser: And what kind of a boat was it?

McGil: Oh, it had 80 horsepower. Eighty-horsepower Union engine in it, and it had a house, sort of, in the middle. It was a tugboat--it was a pretty good boat. I took my wife out on that boat. It's a funny thing. It was down at the fairgrounds--I don't want to go into the fairground story, but I'm just going to tell you this while I think of it. My friend, the boy friend that I run with all the time, he had a girl with him, and he brought another girl, and we went over to Sausalito--I used the boat to go over to Sausalito--I took it on myself. And we went over there and had dinner over there, and so forth. While we were gone, the boat got away from the dock. I only had one line on the dock, and the boat was 'way out in the Bay. I noticed her when I was eating and thought that it resembled my boat. I had to hire a skiff to go out and get it. But the funny part of it was that the girl--coming back--I don't know--George had his arm around his girl, and I--the same thing. I don't know. [Laughter.] It was funny. I had a coat and I put it over my head, and I gave the girl a kiss or something, the girl I had. And he said to me, "You know it's a funny thing, Mac, the girl I have--she seems to like you better than she does me!" And that's my wife today. Isn't that something? [Laughter.]

I'll tell you another little short story on that. She went to the convent up in Rio Vista--the Catholic convent. And I used to run up there with a water barge--that was one part of our business--and we used to get fresh water and bring it down to Benecia for the trains when they didn't have fresh water for their tanks, during the dry season. And we'd stop at Rio Vista and get our food and stuff, and the nuns from the convent would bring the girls down on the bank, and they'd jump aboard the barge, and the boat, and run around, 'cause it was very lonesome up there, and they thought that was great to go on the tug. And she was one of the girls, see? And I didn't know this.

But she was going at the convent during those years, and she was one of the girls. And of course she looked like the rest of them. I didn't know I was going to marry one of those kids. This was long before the 1915 Fair meeting. But when my wife was telling me about the period that she was at the convent it all come to life then.

Teiser: One of the things--I guess you couldn't have borrowed a locomotive to take out for the evening, could you? But you could borrow a boat to go to Sausalito?

McGil: Oh, yes. Crowley didn't mind. I had a lot of friends, and I used to take them out on a Sunday, sometimes. I'd go up and I'd

McGil: hang around these cafés, up around the Black Cat and different ones, and I met a lot of people up there. I remember I formed a kind of a club--"The Entertainers' Outing Club," and I printed cards for all of them, and I'd get these entertainers on a Sunday and we'd go out for a big trip and we'd put barrels of beer on the stern of the boat and everything. We had a pretty big boat. And Crowley'd let me take the boat. And I'd take them out and we'd go 'way up to Petaluma. And they'd go play in the haystacks and everything--we had a big time. And then we'd come back and have a big Italian dinner, and so forth.

Teiser: Well, that was clearly more fun than railroading.

McGil: Oh yes! [Laughter.] Well, I was always a lazy fellow, you know. I mean I wanted a lot of sleep. And on the railroad, I didn't get any, except I slept while the engine was running. But on the boat, when there wasn't anything doing, I'd go in the bunk and lie down.

Teiser: Were most of the boats that you were running just one-man boats?

McGil: Yes, they were. And Crowley--you've seen pictures of these officers down in this new office. Tom had some rooms upstairs with cots, in the old boat house and there were some fellows--old timers--that used to sleep up there, and they'd send them along with me or Willie, or somebody, as deck hands sometimes. They'd go along. Even up the river. He'd send them along. If there wasn't anything doing, they'd just sit on the bench out there, and he'd give them money to go eat and everything, and they'd sleep topside. He was awfully good that way, Tom Sr., you know. He was kind. Some people thought he was cheap, but he wasn't.

There was a fellow named Bill Gately that had a launch about three docks down, and he was running opposition, and probably going out bringing captains in from the ship. And one day he said to Bill--his brother was Assemblyman in Sacramento--"Bill, why don't you bring your boat down to my float where it's more convenient and run from there?" He was a competitor. [Laughter.] So Bill says, "You don't mind, Tom?" And he says, "No." Well, the next thing you know Bill was tying his boat up with the Crowley boats and going out and getting captains and pocketing the money, and sleeping up in Crowley's boathouse. He had a bunk up there. But he used to drink an awful lot, you know. But he was a very nice fellow. I was up there sleeping one time upstairs in the boathouse, and Bill come down after he'd been drinking for quite a while, and all of a

McGil: sudden--I don't know--he got up out of bed and run out and he disappeared. And there used to be a place called Spaza's steak joint about three blocks up there on Drum Street. And he ran out. So I said to him later on, "Bill, what happened to you?" "Well," he said, "Mac, I was drinking for about a week there, and you know when I went to bed, I looked at the window and there was a cow looking in the window. He had a glass head on him and he had electric lights in his eyes. And he was looking at me, you know? I got kinda scared." And he says, "Then you know the clock that I have along side of me? That was a little girl singing. I could hear this little girl singing. That ticking was a song." And he said, "That was all right, but I got scared and I pulled the covers over my head and a cannon went off in the room, and I jumped up, and that's when I ran out, and I went over to the Spaza steak joint and I sat there all night, just drinking coffee until daylight in the morning. I was afraid to go back to bed again."

Another true story about that--Gately. Tom Crowley said to him one time, "Why don't you quit drinking?" Bill says, "Listen, Tom, when I die I want to have a bottle in my mouth." And he was upstairs one time, supposed to be dying, and Tom Crowley got the bottle (Tom told me this himself) and he let him gargle it down. He thought it would do him good, maybe, because he was very sick, see? And he gargled it down and in a few minutes he was dead. So Tom says to me, "Well he wanted to die with a bottle in his mouth; to tell you the truth, Mac, I think I choked him to death, 'cause I poured it down his throat and he couldn't breathe and that's what killed him." I believe that Tom partly made up this story. So that was the end of Bill Gately, anyway.

The Red Stacks

Teiser: When did Mr. Crowley take over the Red Stacks?

McGil: Oh, let's see--it must have been 1917.

Teiser: Just after the 1915 fair?

McGil: Yes. After the fair.* Because--the reason I'm saying that--

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* But see p. 86.

McGil: I remember when the fair closed I went back down to the waterfront again, and I run the boat towing rock barges from McNear's Point down. They were building the Key Route pier, and I was towing rock down. I towed three or four barges down to the pier there, and they dumped the rock. And he didn't own the Red Stacks then.

Teiser: Were the Red Stacks a bigger company than Crowley's then?

McGil: Well, the Red Stacks handled ships only. We didn't handle any ships.

Teiser: I see. Who owned the Red Stacks at that time?

McGil: It was owned by a fellow named Gray and his two sons--Willie and Carl. And before that a fellow named Griffith.

Teiser: Millen Griffith?

McGil: Yes. Old man Griffith started it away back in the early days. Millen Griffith. And you know, when I was a little kid, I was over in Oakland, and there was an old hull alongside the wharf--a towboat hull. My cousin and I jumped down on it and pulled it into the dock and pushed it out, and said, "Oh, this is great." We were so young. And I looked on the name on the side and it said Millen Griffith; see it was named after that man that started the Red Stacks--the father. And then his son was up here. I went into see his son twenty-five years ago or so. He had a business uptown here. And he was interested in old-time pictures and different things and I had quite a talk with him. He was a very nice fellow. I have his picture down there in San Pedro.

Teiser: Then Gray bought it?

McGil: Then Gray bought it, and he had two sons, Willie Gray and another boy. This Willie Gray, he was an educated fellow. He went to college. He put him on one of the tugs, and he was captain of the Sea Prince. World War I came along. Let's see, World War I was 1914-15, or something. Anyway he got on a big ship and I think in a few months he was captain of a big ship going to sea. He was a very smart fellow. The other fellow, Carl, he worked in the office. Now, let us get up to date on that, too. Willie Gray was a nice young fellow--a nice-looking young fellow--and we were down at Vallejo Street wharf and I used to see him every once in a while and talk to him--Captain Gray. A woman that has a yacht down in San Pedro that I helped

McGil: out a little bit, she said to me, "You know, we sailed up into the northern part of the state or up into Seattle or some place up there, and we went into a yacht landing there, and there was a man there that had a big yacht and he says he's well-to-do, and so forth, and he says he knows you." And I said, "What was his name?" And she says, "His name was William Gray." I said, "Yes, how did he look? I haven't seen him since he was practically a teen-ager." And she said, "Oh, he had white hair. He's an elderly man." I says, "Oh. That makes me pretty old!" [Laughter.] So anyway, I guess he retired with a lot of money. He went into the lumber business. They had a lot of money.

You see Mr. Gray didn't like Mr. Crowley, and they did fight. And Crowley got a steam tug like the Red Stacks had, so Gray bought some launches. He bought two launches [later] the Crowley #21 and #22. And he built them. So he was going in the launch business if Crowley was going in the tugboats. So they exchanged. He took the steam tug H. H. Buhne that Crowley bought, and Crowley took the launches over, and they stayed put.

So then Crowley got another fellow, a friend of his--a financier [and said], "Go down and try to buy the Red Stack company out. I understand Mr. Gray wants to sell out." So he went down and he bought the company and he turned it over to Crowley. And Crowley walked in there one day, and Mr. Gray says, "What do you want?" And he says, "I own the company." And Gray was very surprised. He figured he would rather burn the boats up than have Crowley get it. So the people in the office--there was a fellow named Bolger, a bookkeeper, very nice fellow, and a couple of other fellows and Captain Darragh--and they thought, "Oh, we all have to get out. This fellow Crowley, the Crowley Launch Company, owns the business now." "No. Everybody stays," says Mr. Tom Crowley. "Everybody stays as is." And so he kept everybody. The only one to go was Gray. And Mr. Gray, of course, he was well-to-do anyway. So he got out and Crowley took over.

Then when he took over he said, "Mac, you'd better get down and get on the steam tugs." But first he sent me to sea, you know; I told you he sent me to sea.

He [Tom Crowley] was very tough, you know. He was a fighter.

Teiser: Haven't I heard that there were some kind of tugboat wars between rival companies?

McGil: Well, as far as the tugboat companies go, Spreckels had three or four steel tugs, very beautiful tugs. They were large steam tugs. And the Red Stacks had mostly wooden tugs. They had some steel tugs. But they were in competition there. The Spreckels sugar people, you know, they had a lot of money. And Crowley, with the Red Stacks, towed coal barges and things to Oakland, but they [Spreckels] wouldn't tow any dirty vessels or coal barges, 'cause they didn't want to get their tugs dirty. [Laughter.] And they had mats on the docks. So when you['d] go down on the tug, you'd wipe your feet first because the decks were beautifully white and everything, you know. And they'd only take certain jobs. Well, one job they liked to take was to go to sea and tow ships in from sea. And then the lookout at Point Lobos--in those days they didn't get anything from the radio or anything--but the lookout would sight a ship, and he'd call in that there was a mast sighted off maybe about twenty miles, out towards the Farallones. So then this fellow Spreckels would watch Crowley to see if he was going out after the ship, because they didn't like to go out too far, 'cause the ship often wanted to keep on sailing in, and he wouldn't take a line from the tug until he got close to the Golden Gate if the wind was right. So they were about two docks away. The two tugboat companies, and they'd watch to see if the Red Stack--Crowley's boat--was going out and vice versa. Well, sure he was. He went out. But then he went up towards Angel Island and not headed for sea, like going up the river, and then when he'd get up to Raccoon Straits, the other side of Angel Island, he'd turn around and go to sea. And they thought he went up the river, see? So they figured Crowley didn't send any tug. And the next thing they knew Crowley was coming in with the ship, see? So they used to pull tricks like that.

And another thing, if the ship was out there at night-time, they'd put their running lights out, and they'd sneak out with no lights, and things like that, you see? And then Crowley would pay the fellow out at Point Lobos a little extra money to call him first, maybe and things like that. [Laughter.] And they had competition in that way in towing the ships. And then when you went to the ship you made a deal with the captain for so much to tow him in, and you'd bring him into the port. And that went on for a long time.

And then Rolph got a tug--Governor Rolph, you know--he [had] built up north and called her the Storm King. And he had that down at the dock, and Rolph was out for the business of towing, and he did get a lot of log raft work, towing log rafts from Portland down to San Diego, and those log rafts towed very slow.

McGil: They were cigar-shaped, you know, and they only went about two miles an hour, and when they started to head for Honolulu, you had to go with them and coax them back, because they were bound to go; they'd capsize the tug if you didn't. So he got a lot of that for a while.

So then after a while Spreckels said, well, they didn't think that they were doing so good, because they were so particular about the jobs they got, and their tugs were so nice and the brass shined and everything. So Crowley says, "Let me take you over." So he bought them out. And he took the tugs over to his place, and after a while they didn't look so clean, and they weren't so particular. They towed coal barges, and everything else. He was in it to make money.

And then Rolph had the Storm King--that was the only one left. Now, he had it in the next dock. So they talked to him, and he says, "Well, I'll trade you in there and take some stock in your company." So Jim Rolph was a director in the Red Stack company later on.

So Crowley took the boat, Storm King, and he used it for quite a while in the Bay and for towing. It was a very powerful boat. It had engines that were taken out of the city powerhouse down at the foot of Webster Street, the gas and electric plant. They took the engines out of there and put them in the boat. And the engine was so big and it took so much steam that the boilers couldn't handle it, and they had to put sleeves inside to cut down the size of the cylinders so the boilers could handle it. So they had that tug for a few years, and one morning Tom told me, "You take that Storm King--the crew, the whole bunch of you--and take her over to Oakland and run her up in the mud over there as far as you can." And I did. I took her over and I run her up in Alameda, there, in the mud flat, and I put the anchor out, and that was supposed to be the end of that.

Then later on they found out that there was some piling under there, stubs of piling, and that I run her on top of a pile and knocked a hole in her. So the tide was coming up and down inside her hull, see? [Laughter.] They found that out. So anyway--that wasn't my fault. I didn't know what was there below the water. I was told where to put it.

They got the boat out and they fixed her up, and then they decided to take the engines out. They took the engines out and then they sold her for a fishing barge, and she was down off Southern California while I was down in San Pedro office there.

McGil: And one day the government called me up and said, "There's a boat called the Storm King anchored down here, and that boat has been abandoned, and we want to know how much you would charge us to take that boat and do away with it some way. You can't sink it, because those heavy timbers will float and they'll wreck a ship or something. You've got to do something with it."

So we figured it out, and I talked to San Francisco. So to make the long story short, we did the job. We bid it, and we towed her up to Antioch, up there in the river, and Willie Figari went up there and I think they took cans of kerosene and they burned her up, up there. So that was the end of the Storm King and that was the end of the competition or opposition--what you're talking about, see? And then Crowley had it all--the Red Stacks had it all.

Teiser: Didn't Peterson go out early?

McGil: He went out of business. Yes, about the same time that Crowley bought the Red Stacks. And Crowley bought some of his boats, the William D and some of those boats. But Peterson didn't have very much, and he wasn't a very strong competitor. I don't know--he was easy-going.

By the way, Peterson went to [the University of] California over there, too. He rowed with my father on Lake Merritt over there--this fellow Henry Peterson.

Teiser: Really?

McGil: Yes. He was a college man. So that was it on that. So then I went to sea.

Going to Sea

Teiser: Yes. What is the story about your going to sea? You went to China? You shipped out?

McGil: No. Crowley said, "Mac, I might as well make a good sailor out of you." This is before I went in the Red Stacks. And he says, "You know to tie knots, you know this and that, but to make a good sailor out of you I'm going to put you--" he had an interest in the Grace Line--he said, "I'll put you on this steamer Peru." First he told me a joke about the Peru. She was on the China run,

McGil: and she come in, and she laid out in San Francisco Bay here. And they laid all the crew off, and the captain come in the office, and they said to him, "Well, you're not laid off, Captain, because we're gonna start her up again later on." That was some time before I went on her. And she laid out in the Bay for about five years, and the captain come in and collected his salary every month, and they didn't know it. For about a year only the office knew it. The manager of the office had orders to pay him every month. They thought they were going to start her right up. They'd been paying him for a year before they found out that he wasn't working--just coming down and getting his check. So they couldn't do anything about it.

But they brought the ship into the dock after that lay-up, and Crowley says, "I'll put you on there, and you go down to Panama, and it'll do you good." "All right, I'll go as quartermaster." I went as quartermaster to steer the ship. And she went in the dry-dock at Hunters Point and Crowley was up there looking at the bottom, so I knew he had interest in her, and so forth. So I made a trip down to Panama, and then when I come back he said, "Well you better make a trip over to China. I've got a friend on a China ship." So I went on a ship called the Ecuador over to China. And we went to China and Manila and all those places, and I was gone for three months and a half. I was married then, too.

Teiser: Did you enjoy life at sea?

McGil: Oh, yes, I enjoyed it. It was very lonesome though. I decided I didn't want to be a sea-captain because many nights I'd be at the wheel there, and it was so lonesome out at sea, all those monsoons and rough weather, and everything. We had a Chinese crew. And I thought I never wanted to be an officer on a ship, or anything like that, because it's a lonesome life. I was thinking of all the parties and everything my friends were having at home that I was missing, you know, more than anything else. Because I'd be at the wheel at ten and eleven o'clock at night, and I thought, "Gee, I'll bet they're having a good party and they're drinking punch and having a big time. [Laughter.] And here I am out in the middle of the ocean--out in the China Sea." So anyway, I got off then on return to San Francisco, and so then he got me back on the boats, and then I got down to the Red Stacks, and then to San Pedro, you know.

San Pedro and Coastwide Operation

McGil: The joke was always that fellow named Mohr went down there, Captain [Ernest] Mohr that worked for Crowley on the tugs.

McGil: He sent him down to San Pedro. I didn't want to go down to San Pedro. But Mohr got sick, and someone had to go.

Teiser: Standard Oil had asked Crowley to send boats down there?

McGil: Yes. 1922.

So he said, "I'd like you to go down to San Pedro, Mac, and take care of that office down there." "Aw," I says, "I don't want to go." "Well, go on down there for a while, and when he gets well we'll send him back again."

Teiser: Ernest Mohr got ill?

McGil: Yes. Captain Mohr got ill. So I went down there, and the answer was, I stayed there for 46 years, and I figured if he didn't come back, I'd take his job--I always said that as a joke. But I got down there, and he left Crowley and he went as a pilot in the Bay here and never did come back down there. And of course I had a good wife that didn't mind changing, and she got down there, and of course she got mixed up with knowing all the people around the church and everything, and we built a nice home down there, and we became used to it. But we'd come up to San Francisco--it's awful hard to get away from San Francisco, you know. And when we'd go out on the Yale again and go down, we'd pass a Red Stack tug; they'd blow three whistles on all the tugs, and the tears'd run down my face, you know, and the same with my wife. We hated to leave.

Teiser: In the old days when the Yale and the Harvard were running?

McGil: Yes. The Yale and Harvard. We hated to leave, you know. And then after a while we broke away. On every vacation I'd come up here, but after a while I went down to Mexico and I went to New York, and all around. So I broke away from it. And of course San Francisco isn't today like it used to be. And when I see these hippies and changes around, it makes me sick.

Teiser: You don't have them in San Pedro?

McGil: Yes, they have some--very few. Might be three or four in the whole town.

Teiser: Tell about the growth of that operation down there. Has it grown considerably over the years?

McGil: In San Pedro? Yes, it has. And not because of me for any reason, but they had built more docks and more shipping and they have a lot of oil--the oil vessels come and go--and cargo--all kinds of cargo. And they have wheat and grain comes in there, and they get passenger ships. A lot of passenger ships leave from there. So it grew to be pretty big, and we had to get more powerful tugs for the big ships and the big super tankers, you see. And it got pretty big.

Teiser: Have you in general, over the years, had your own tugs built for you?

McGil: Oh, yes. We had them built at different shipyards around, and they built some tugs down in the Gulf and all around. But these tugs we had, most of them were built over in Oakland, in Alameda there. There's that big shipyard--Pacific Shipyard--and I think Crowley's a director in that, too. He has an interest of some sort.

We just had a directors' meeting today. I've been a director with the company, you know. I told [the younger Tom] Crowley--he gets out all the books and he gets out his percentages, and all that--I told him last time we had a meeting down at the other place, "Your dad and I, you know when we had the first business--when we had the business down there--we used to have a cash register. If a captain went out to a ship, it was a dollar, and and this was a dollar and the freight was so much, etc., and we put all the money in the cash register. And the next morning we dumped it on the table, and so much for you and so much for--" [Laughter.] Tom says, "That was before taxes." And I says, "Yes."

Teiser: When were you made a director of the company, then?

McGil: Oh, about five years ago. I didn't know why they made me a director, being 'way down in San Pedro, but it's good, you know, in a company to have directors that understand the tugboat operations.

Teiser: How many boats have you got down there now?

McGil: I've got ten.

Teiser: How many did you start off with?

McGil: Three. But you know, it's a funny part about this director business. I saw in a book--a marine book--it said they were building two tugs down in the Gulf, a million and a half apiece or something. And I says, "Gee. For the Red Stacks?" I didn't remember that. So I happened to be up for a directors' meeting here and I said, "What are these two tugs you're building down in the Gulf, Tom?" He said, "What do you mean--the--" and he gave me the names. And I said, "Yes. I seen it in a marine book there." And he says, "You're the one that seconded the motion. What do you want, to rescind it now?" [Laughter.] I says, "I didn't say anything, forget it, will you?" He says, "When I asked about building the tugs, somebody made a motion that we go ahead and build them. You seconded the motion." I says, "Forget it, will you?" [Laughter.]

Teiser: How do you happen to have boats built down there?

McGil: Well, the weather's good down there, I guess, and they get fair prices. You see they send the plans around and get prices, and when you're building boats that cost that much, if you can save $10,000 or something, you know, it helps out. And then some of those shipyards, like Todd Shipyards built some for us, and Bethlehem over in Oakland, and things like that, and they give us business, you know.

Teiser: The ones built in the Gulf. Do they operate in Mexico?

McGil: No, they're up here. They're in Seattle. They go running up to the north.

Teiser: How much coast-wise towing is there now?

McGil: Well, there is a lot of it in the north, let's put it that way. At this meeting here, there's another competitor come in the Bay, you know, while Crowley was out on the strike.* So they're having a hard time.

Teiser: He came from up north?

McGil: No. Well, he's all over. He's in New York, San Pedro, he's all over. He hasn't got tugs in San Pedro--they have lifts--derrick

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* The nine-month strike that started June 10, 1969.

McGil: barges. Of course it cuts the Red Stacks down, so as far as the Red Stacks' coastwise work goes, it's kinda hard to get--the engineers want so much money--so it's rather hard to get any business in San Francisco. Therefore they sent all the tugs to Seattle, and run 'em up into Alaska and up there, and they charter them--Seattle charters them from us. That's our company in Seattle.

Teiser: What's the name of that company?

McGil: It's the Puget Sound Tug and Barge. And they have the boats up there and the costs are less. But if they're down here--you see, they have a different union agreement. Because the boats are automated, see? The engineer, he's just a technical man. He sits in the pilot house, an automated engine room. He don't go near the engine. And he watches all the gauges, just like a man in an aeroplane--a pilot, see? And you don't need three engineers on there--three watches. He can go to bed and the fellow at the wheel, if he sees a red light or something, he calls the engineer--something getting hot, see? The single engineer receives very good pay to handle the job.

Teiser: For what you were doing for five dollars a week?

McGil: Yes. That's right. Oh, they get big money now.

Teiser: Have you ever been up to the Northwest for Crowley?

McGil: Not working up there. I used to go up there once in a while. I haven't been up there in a long time. Read that [page of notes]. I'll be right back.

Teiser: All right. . . . Here you have a note that you went back to the tugs again and became captain of a steam tug which Crowley just purchased from the fish company?

McGil: Oh, yes. That was one of the tugs. He got them from Paladini Fish Company. It was a tug called the Paladini Brothers, and Crowley bought that off of Paladini. It was a steam. Did you know Paladini as a family? Ever hear of them?

Teiser: I know the name--just the name.

McGil: Paladini was one of the few millionaires in San Francisco. And he was an elderly fellow, and he used to go down at five o'clock in the morning and clean fish down at the fish market. They say that's the way he was--one of the old-timers. And he had a good

McGil: bit of money it was said. Everybody used to say that his kids would spend it as fast as they could. But he [Crowley] bought the tug, and after he bought it somebody told him [Paladini] he was a fool to sell it to Crowley, and he come in to Crowley and said he wanted the tug back again. And Crowley wouldn't give it to him. And I had that tug as captain for a while. I used to go up the river with it and do Bay work.

Teiser: You have written here in your notes that on June 8, 1920, Mr. Crowley bought the Shipowners and Merchants Towboat Company.

McGil: Yes. That's it. The Red Stacks--Shipowners. That was the original name.

Teiser: One of the things that you wrote me about--you said that at one time there was a convict ship. Mr. Crowley apparently was doing great business operations with one hand, and these little entertainment things with the other. What was that story?

McGil: The convict ship came in here--it was a British convict ship--

Teiser: How did it happen? What was it doing here?

McGil: Well, here's the point: They were taking it around the world to show it to people--on exhibition, see? I was out on the ship, and on the ship they had all these torture machines and everything where they stood them up in a ring of steel with thorns--I mean with spikes--and how they tortured them in the hold of the ship; it was very interesting, but sad. I don't know, they come out here and they had a lot of money, and she was called The Success, a wooden ship, and anchored in the Bay. And Crowley said to the man, "What can we do to draw people?" "Where do the people come?" He says, "They come down to the ferry and they go across on those ferry boats all the time."

Well, Crowley and he got together and they decided to dress a couple of the crew off the convict ship up in convict suits, and everything, and a cap with stripes. And then put a big rubber ball on a chain, a rubber chain, on their foot, and walk around down at the Ferry Building selling tickets for the convict ship. And it took big. The people came down and we loaded the launches up, and we'd take them out, you know. She stayed for about three or four months, and boy, we made quite a bit of money with those fellows. And it was surprising when you'd come down to the ferry and see a couple of convicts with a big ball

McGil: on his foot. The Oakland ferries were operating then. So that was one of the things when he made money.

And then when the White Fleet come in 1907 or '08--all the battleships--we made a lot of money. I told you about me collecting the money, and putting it in my pocket and finding it when I got home. Yeah, I told you. [Laughter.]

But the sailors would come in and we'd collect a lot of money from them. In the meantime we'd go up the river and tow and do different things and--I don't know--I enjoyed it very much. We didn't get home too often. We worked long hours, and we'd go upstairs in the boat house and sleep sometimes. They're all a pretty tough bunch along the waterfront in those days, you know.

Teiser: Where did you eat? Did you eat at the restaurants along the wharf?

McGil: Yes. We'd go across the street to the Greek restaurant, and we'd get a meal. We'd get soup and we'd get a meat dish, an entree, and we'd get a piece of pie and a cup of coffee for twenty cents. Things were cheap. Or you could go in and get a glass of beer and you could get a sandwich with that for five cents. So, it didn't take much money, as far as that goes.

Two Wars and the Depression

McGil: Then when World War I came, I felt a little bit sheepish being the right age and not going to war, you know. First off, they called me for the draft, and I went up to the City Hall or one of those buildings up there and oh--it was a wild, cold morning, and they said, "Take off your clothes," throwing them in the corner, and gee, there were clothes piled all over, and all kinds of naked guys there, and gee, I passed a bunch of doctors and they felt me all over and everything--so that was it. I says to the wife, "I guess I gotta go to war. I don't know--they passed me and they didn't say anything was wrong with me. They took my eyesight, looked at my teeth, and all that stuff." Then I got a questionnaire asking me what I did for a living. Well, I thought, what I actually did at that time, I was taking battleships into Hunters Point drydock, acting as a pilot. And I was using our tug with the Navy tugs because I knew that drydock pretty well, and the Navy pilots didn't. So I told them I was

McGil: docking Navy ships, and I was a pilot in the Bay, and I had a pilot license. For God's sake, they sent me back a notice that I was in Class Five, and I never knew what Class Five was, and I met a young fellow that had one leg one time, and I said, "What class would you be in in the draft?" And he says, "I'm classified, I'm in Five." [Laughter.] So I was in Class Five! So I still felt kinda sheepish going home in the streetcar--a young fellow and here I wasn't going to war. Somebody said if you go down to San Diego you could be an officer, because you're a pilot, and you could get a Lieutenant Commander's job, or something like that. And there was a Navy place up on Market Street, so I went up and I saw the Navy fellow up there and told him that I'd like to get in the Navy if I could make an officer's job, and so forth. So he asked me what I did, and all about it, and I told him the truth. "Oh," he said, "We need pilots in the Bay more than we need officers or anything, so you better stay with what you have."

So I've never been in a war except helping ships--warships--in and out, and doing that kind of work.

Teiser: World War I was a very busy time in this Bay, was it?

McGil: Oh, yes. It was very busy. There was a lot of ships come in here at that time. They loaded munitions, and went up river and got stuff, oil and coal and a lot of things like that.

Those coal tankers used to come in. And the battleships would come in. There were a lot of battleships, and we used to bring coal down from California City. You know, I'd tow maybe two coal barges down and bring them alongside of a battleship. I'd get there in the dark of the night, you know, and knock the scuppers off, bringing them alongside. [Laughter.] But tie the barges up, and then the boys with all these white uniforms--the sailor boys--would jump down in the coal and those things were almost clean. I hated to see them get all dirty. And they'd shovel the coal in the buckets, and they'd hoist it up on the ship. And to make them feel good they had a band of music up there, playing all night. And I'd stay there and sleep in the boat and wait until they got the barges unloaded, and then I'd take them back again for another load, you know. The tug would take them back. That was World War I. Yes, it was quite lively in World War I.

I was down here at the dock with this boat, Crowley #9 that Paladini had, and the war was over and they blew the whistles around the Ferry Building and I blew the steam whistle on that boat--I blew it, blew it, blew it--cause they signed up. The war was over, see?

McGil: Now, that was a funny thing, that boat. Later on that boat come down to San Pedro as one of my boats--they sent her down, they didn't need her up here. Now in World War II, and we had word that war was over and so forth, and they blew whistles down there, too. So I says, I have to blow a whistle on the boat, and I jumped down on the boat and I pulled the whistle and blew it, and blew it, and I looked and I says, "Isn't it funny? It's the same boat that I blew the whistle on in San Francisco in World War I." Isn't that peculiar? She was called the Ajax then. She was Crowley #9 when she was up here. I blew the whistle on the same boat for the two wars. Funny thing. [Laughter.]

Teiser: I suppose the Depression was the other period when things changed a lot. You were down in San Pedro then.

McGil: 1929. Yes, I was down at San Pedro. Well, it didn't change so much. Of course the stock market was the biggest thing.

Teiser: You still had a lot of work to do?

McGil: The ships came. You see the foreign ships, and things, were coming in, and that's what we did most of our work with--foreign ships. It was a big oil port. [They] discovered oil on Signal Hill, Long Beach. So the U.S. ships didn't make much difference.

Teiser: Up here things were very slow, were they not?

McGil: Yes. I think they were. An awful lot of American ships coming in here, and then trucking and everything got slow, and everybody was going to the wall. They were all losing money, you know.

The Fillmore Street Hill and the 1915 Fair

McGil: Where do you live on Vallejo Street, out about Fillmore?

Teiser: No, just near Mason. The North Beach side of Russian Hill.

McGil: Mason. Oh, I was just wondering where that number was at, you know. Vallejo Street I can remember when I was a kid. I used to go up on the top of Fillmore hill and we watched the cars with the cable going up and down, you know. Vallejo Street, Pacific Avenue. It was Pacific Avenue up there, and Pacific Street when you get 'way down below. [Laughter.]

Teiser: That cable car on the Fillmore Street hill must have been fun to ride in.

McGil: Well, it was. And that was a very steep hill. And it's a wonder that that cable didn't break sometimes. A car'd come along and they'd hook it on the cable, they'd put a big bolt through, and then the fellow was down at the bottom of the second hill and then this fellow would ring a telephone buzzer or something and the other fellow at the top would answer the buzzer down there, and that meant, "Start up." And then they'd both put on their control. One car going down would help pull the other one up, see? And then when they'd go down, they'd let go of this thing and the car would go on down. And then you'd get down there towards Harbor View, and there was a little steam train down there that used to run down to the baths down there at Harbor View. And of course we used to go out to the Sutro Baths as well and swim out there when we were kids.

Teiser: Did you watch them turning Harbor View into the Marina? Did you watch them turning that into the fairgrounds?

McGil: Oh yes! I helped build that. Let's put it this way, they wanted red rock on the roads in the fairgrounds, and they thought if they could get it across the Bay--have you ever noticed over there at Lime Point and over at Fort Baker, that's all red rock? So they hired Crowley to bring the red rock over to build the fairgrounds.

Teiser: Isn't that all government-owned land?

McGil: Yes. It's government land. They allowed him to come over and get the rock. So they built a trestle over there at Fort Baker and had a little train with cars, and they'd go up and they'd load the cars, and I'd bring the barge over and put it under the trestle, and the cars would dump the rock on there, and then I'd tow it back across the Bay to the fairgrounds. And we had a steam hoist on a truck, I think it was, there and we used to pick it up with a bucket and they'd take it around the fairgrounds and build the roads. And we helped build the fairgrounds and then when it was built we worked down there all the time on our boats.

You know they had a little train down there that used to pull a lot of cars--I never told you that about Crowley. Of course Crowley was pretty smart. But they had a little train. Everybody had concessions, and this man had a concession on the train. And he built the steam engine that pulled it. It was a cute little engine about three feet high. And he pulled about ten cars. It was a good, big, nice steam engine and he was a mechanic

McGil: --he built it himself. And he had all these cars with the seats running sideways, and the people all would sit in there, and the conductor would come through in the middle between the seats and collect the money--five cents. And he'd go all around the fairground, and you could get off at any building you wanted, and he stopped at yacht harbor, where Crowley was--that was one of the stops. But what he wanted to do was run the engine, because he was interested in the little engine--he could pull the throttle and run the engine. The other fellow collected the money. So he said to Tom one time, "Mr. Crowley, you've got a concession and I've got a concession I have to pay for. This train, you know--I've been running it a long time and it's full all the time. But I don't make any profit by the time I pay the fairgrounds off, and my expenses and my oil." "Well," Crowley says, "I'll tell you why you don't make any profit." "Why?" "Because you're on the wrong end of the train." "Oh," he says, "What do you mean?" He says, "You get some young boy to run that little engine, and you get in there and collect the money." And he did. He got some teen-ager, a nineteen-year-old boy, mechanically inclined, to run the engine [with], which he was tickled to death, and he got in there and collected the money. And about a month later he said, "Mr. Crowley, I'm making all kinds of money now." The other fellow was stealing all the money, while the owner was interested in the engine. [Laughter.] I thought that was pretty good.

Teiser: Did you say Mr. Crowley had an actual concession at the Fair?

McGil: Oh, yes. We all had a concession.

Teiser: You had to pay the fair for . . .

McGil: Oh, yes. We had to pay the fair so much to operate out of there, but we made good money in there, you know. And we took people around the Bay, and a lot of people that worked in the food products building, like I say, that used to come ride in the boat, you know, and we'd go and get our free food there, and stuff. [Laughter.] But I loved the fair. And when it closed we were very sad, because it was a great fair. I was to the fair in Chicago and over on the island here--Goat Island--* and it was nothing like that 1915 Fair. They didn't think it would be good because of the war, but oh boy! That was a beautiful fair! Everything was free, you know--and everything was so nice there. Souza's band was always playing there, and all free. It

* The Golden Gate International Exposition of 1939 and 1940.

McGil: was good. I never wanted to go home until the gates closed. I told you about the fellow--they had races there and he had me bet on the auto races, didn't I?

Well I was on the boat in the pilot house--I'll make this short as I can--He was out there with his daughter outside the pilot house, and they had automobile races in the fairgrounds. And he said, "Who do you think will win the race today?" I says, "I don't know. I don't [know] much about it. I don't figure them. But a lot of people are betting on them." But he said, "I think that this fellow Demerest is gonna win." I said, "Oh, God, Demerest. That's a guy that never wins--I know that." I saw that in the paper--I got that in the fairgrounds paper everyday. And I says, "He's always last." And he says, "I think he's going to win today." I says, "I don't think so." He says, "I'll bet you twenty dollars." And twenty dollars was a lot of money then, and I said, "All right, I'll bet you twenty dollars," and his daughter said, "Go ahead and bet him. He bets on everything, and he's always losing." And I thought well maybe he knows something about it--got something inside on it, or something.

So I went home to the wife, and I said, "Gee, give me twenty dollars. I'll have to have it in my pocket." Oh--he said, "I'm staying up at the Fairmont Hotel, and if I win, I'll come down and collect the twenty dollars from you. If you win, I'll give you the money. I'll come down." I says, "All right." So I had that twenty dollars in my pocket for about two months. He never showed up. Boy, was I tickled to death! The fellow Demerest won. [Laughter.] Oh, yes, that was the funny part of it. Here I got the paper and there was a big headline in black there, "Demerest won the race." Oh, God. So I told the wife, "You better give me the twenty dollars, he'll come down sure." He never showed up. I always said he was a nice man. [Laughter.] But I think he was a millionaire--he didn't care.

Wine and Shipwrecks

Teiser: You mentioned something in a letter about a launchman tapping the wine barrels while towing the wine barge from Winehaven to San Francisco.

McGil: Yes. There was a fellow. He was quite a wino. He's dead now, of course, but let us just call him the launchman.

McGil: Crowley sold a boat to Winehaven--a boat called the Meteor. I said to my deck hand, "Let us go down and show him how to run that darn boat. Maybe he don't know enough about it." So I went down to where they had it tied up down the channel here, Third Street, and we went aboard and started the engine and showed him everything.

He would go over to Winehaven with the barge, and they'd load it up with wine in barrels, and they used to bring it over to ships, and the ships would take it around the Horn and bring it back, and it would be aged. It aged three or four times faster in a ship when it's rolling, see? And we used to take it over to the ships.

Teiser: Was it in casks?

McGil: Yes. Wooden casks. So they found out, later--somehow they found out, but I didn't know just how--that the operator was boring a small hole in a barrel. He had a plug the size of the drill, and [he would] put a can there and let it fill it up and then pour it in a bottle and put the plug in the hole and cut it off, and then rub it over with some dirt or something, so you couldn't see it. [Laughter.] So he used to take a bottle of wine out of some barrels if he wanted to. But he had plenty of wine. He put it down in the forecastle in the launch. And I think that they wondered why he was so inebriated all the time when he was running that launch. [Laughter.] Because they didn't give him any wine up at Winehaven. So they got rid of him, and we found out that that's what he was doing--tapping the barrels. But he figured they wouldn't miss one bottle out of a barrel, and so forth. So they found the plugs in there, and things like that. [Laughter.] A lot of things happened in those days.

Teiser: You had another note about the S.S. Alameda ashore at Fort Point, pulled off by Red Stacks."

McGil: Yes. She was ashore at Fort Point. There's a picture of her around here some place. She went out in a fog and she went ashore right at Fort Point inside the buoy, and she went up pretty strong on the rocks, there. And I went out in a launch with Mr. Crowley, Dave Crowley, the step-brother, and there was kind of a sea running inside the ship. And one thing I did see, a fishboat was there--they were throwing grain overboard--sacks of grain--to lighten the ship. And these fish boats were going in there--pretty big fish boats--to catch all the grain they could on the forecastle. The sacks would fall and they'd break, sure. But a big sea come inside

McGil: and the fish boat stood straight up in the air and it sunk, went down. And Dave Crowley says, "See if you can throw the anchor and hook it before it goes down." I tried to hook it with the anchor--throw my anchor on and hook it--but I couldn't. It went down. And we saved the men, but the fish boat was lost.

And then while I was alongside, the next day or so, they had a powerful tug called the Dauntless (her picture's down there), a big steam tug--a Red Stack tug. And she had a big wire on the bow. It was high tide. And I heard a noise like I never heard before in my life--when you hear iron scraping on rocks! She [the S.S. Alameda] was solid, but lightening her up with this stuff it brought her up a little and at high tide she wasn't so bad, and all of a sudden, "Roombada-roomada-room," I hear the rocks and iron crashing, and she went off and she left us and she went out and she went towing down the Bay, and they towed her down here to the Union Iron Works and put her on the drydock. And later on they fixed her up and she went on up to Seattle, and she ran up there for a while, and I have a picture of her where she went on the rocks up in Alaska, years later, and was lost.

And then there was another one called the Damara--a British freighter--went on down there on the rocks at Fort Point, too. And then the Rio de Janiero,* I don't know if you ever heard of her, but I was only a kid then. But she went down with all those people and they never found her. She drifted away, underneath somewhere, you know. She was out there at Mile Rock. And she went down and then she drifted away, and the captain locked himself in a room and went down with her. And they never did find any trace of her. Now the other night, the wife was saying about that ship they're sinking with the nerve gas--6,000 feet. I said, "That ship won't go down to the bottom right now. And they'll never find her." And then I read in this morning's paper where they couldn't find out where she was. Because when she gets down so far--even iron will float when you get down so many thousand feet, you know. Iron practically floats. But if she goes down this way she'll kind of slide off. She'll slide through the water, this way, at an angle like a sled. If her bow is lower than the stern she'll slide this way, and she'll go this way. She might be a mile or two away from where she went down, if they do find her. But I think, where she is now, she doesn't rest hard on the bottom. The only thing, the water pressure may press her sides in and maybe break her up down there. Of course they'll have trouble, finding her, I believe. But when a vessel goes down--that's just like the Rio de Janiero where nobody knows where she went. She went down and then

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* The City of Rio de Janeiro went down in 1901.

McGil: she got in that undertow down there, and went out to sea someplace--out on a bar--and then was covered with sand out there.

Teiser: Well you've certainly seen a lot of interesting things and been involved in them here around the Bay.

McGil: Well, there is a lot of things that I haven't told you that come to my mind once in a while.

Teiser: We've asked the younger Tom Crowley to be interviewed.

McGil: Oh yes. He could give you a lot of good information. You know all these things--when I talk to him about them he knows about them, too.

Further Reminiscences of Tom Crowley

Teiser: One thing that I wanted to ask you. When you first met the senior Tom Crowley, what did he look like? Can you describe him physically?

McGil: Oh, he was a fine-looking fellow. He was always a small man. He was rather short, but in proportion he was well built, no big stomach or anything. And he played golf a lot, and he was quite a fellow for the athletes--more or less fighting and everything like that. But he was very good looking, and he used to tell me that he had a beautiful set of teeth when he was younger, and he said, "I used to feel so proud when the girls used to say my teeth were so pretty." He always was a nice looking feller and he dressed nice. He didn't look like just a boy so much.

Teiser: You said that he was the first of the men on the waterfront who went uptown, and who was able to--

McGil: That's right. The rest of them used to stay down on the front and get their business from down here, and he went uptown and he mixed with the big boys and he went up to the Commercial Club and Olympic Club, and he joined all those different clubs.

Teiser: I suppose he looked the part, didn't he?

McGil: Yes. He didn't have much schooling, but he could talk to anybody, and talk business to them, and he'd tell them just what he thought. Used perfect language.

McGil: Did I tell you about the time he had all the money in his pocket from the fleet and the fellow come down to fight him? He had a big load of silver in his pocket and it was weighing his pants down. He collected it from sailors coming off the battleships on his boats. And this fellow was a prize fighter--a four-round prize fighter, and he had something against him and Tom bawled him out, and he started fighting with him. And Tom was trying to fight with one hand and hold his suspenders up with the other. He was afraid he'd lose the money--he thought more of the money. [Laughter.] And he'd fight with this hand and then this hand. That was down there at Vallejo Street wharf. And the fellow licked him. And that was all right. [Laughter.] That'll show you what kind of a fighter he was. But he come in and he was wiping the blood off his face, and he got all the money out of his pocket and he said, "Mac, we'll put it in the safe." We had a little safe there. He put it in the safe and then he says, "I'll get that fellow some other time."

One time the fellow did come back around the front there. He used to come around there. He lived over in North Beach. And Tom saw him and he went out after him. And he beat the hell out of him--he didn't have any money in his pocket then. [Laughter.] But he took off his coat and his hat, and he went after the feller and he just plowed him and knocked him down, and he knocked him down three or four times and the fellow never came back anymore. So that's the kind of a feller he was. [Laughter.] But while he had the money he was only using one hand. Oh, boy! That was funny.

Then I was out on the ship with him one time and Peterson's boat was out there, and we were taking the crews off the ship from Alaska. There was a fellow--I can't remember his name now, but he worked for Peterson Launch Company, and he was up there soliciting crews. Tom Crowley was up there and I was down in the boat. The Peterson man was telling the fellows that were getting on my boat to go over on his boat--he'd holler down, "Go over on that boat on the outside" of my boat--on the Peterson boat, see? So I climbed up the Jacob's ladder and I went up on the ship, and I said, "Tom, you know what he's doing? He's taking the men off our boat and putting them on his boat." And he says, "He is?" And there was one of those pike poles, we call them, with the sharp edge, and he went after him with that pole. And the fellow run, and he ran up on the forecastle head of the ship, and he threwthis spear at him, you know, and he missed him and the thing went overboard. He chased him around and he said, "You get off this damn ship and take your boat out of here. I'll break your damn neck." He got down the ladder and got on his boat and went

McGil: ashore and he only had about three men, and we took about fifteen or twenty or thirty men ashore, see? But that's the way he was. [Laughter.] He was a fighting Irishman, you know. Oh, he called him everything. That fellow died later on. And he was rather young.

There were a lot of Chinamen on these ships and we'd take them to Oakland sometimes. And I used to have a lot of fun with the Chinamen.

Teiser: Why did you take them to Oakland?

McGil: Some of them lived in Chinatown in Oakland. And I'd say, "You go San Francisco?" "No, me go Oakland." And I'd ask the same feller about ten times the same question just to hear him say it. I'd say, "Where you go? San Francisco?" "No, me go Oakland." Same fellow all the time. I used to have a lot of fun with them. [Laughter.]

Teiser: What did they do, live over there and work over here?

McGil: They come from Alaska on the ship. They worked in the cannery up there. You know, we used to get a barrel of salmon off the ship once in a while--salmon bellies and everything. And a story Mr. Crowley told--it isn't a very nice story--you shouldn't tell it at the dinner table, maybe, but a fellow down at Meiggs Wharf, a fellow named Charlie Barlow, got a barrel of salmon off the ship, and he brought it in, and it seemed that a Chinaman died up there, and they crushed him in the barrel and nailed the barrel up and everything and mixed it up with the salmon barrels, and when he opened it he saw the dead Chinaman. [Laughter.] Isn't that terrible? Crowley told me that.* Of course I didn't see it. He always told the truth. He never lied about anything. He used to tell me a lot of stories and things.

I asked him about a fellow one time, and he says, "Yes. You know he was head of that steamship company. You know, Mac, I'll tell you something about him. I saw him about a month ago, and he was down near the ferry and he had his pockets all bulged out or something." I says, "Yeah?" He said, "Yes. And I said, 'What are you doin'? Where are you going?' 'Well,' he says, 'I'll tell you, Tom, I'm going to jump overboard and commit suicide. My wife run away with another fella, and I just can't live. I gotta jump overboard.'"

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* See also the Thomas Crowley interview in this series, p.

McGil: And Crowley says, "What's in your pocket?" And he says, "Those are weights, rocks and lead," and he said he took them out of his pocket and he says, "That'll make me sink fast." And he [Crowley] says, "Come on over and let's have a drink," and he said he talked him out of it. And that was it--he didn't commit suicide. He told me a lot of stories like that.

APPENDIX A

Letters from William McGillivray to various persons

SAN PEDRO TUG BOAT COMPANY

RED STACK TUGS

TELEPHONES
TERMINAL 2-1158 2-1159

SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA

OFFICE
BERTH 88
P. O. 549

Nov 28,1968

Dear Willie,

As far as Tom Sr goes you know him longer than I do but we both know that after you sum it up he was a father to all of us. He gave us all hell but he always made sure that we were eating three meals a day. Look at all the fellows that depended on him. There was Monk Mc Andrews, Minor Malaney, Charlie Carlo and his cousin, old Ben that made the fenders at Howard Street Wharf, Bill Dilon and Bill Gateley. He made sure that none of these fellows didn't go hungry. Sure they went out as deckhand once in a while and did a few little jobs but they were well looked after. Tom had sleeping quarters at Vallejo St as well as Howard Street wharf and these fellows were always welcome to a warm bed. Also there was the Desmonds who slept there. All these fellows hit the wine or booze heavily but Tom knew that. There wasn't a one of these fellows that wouldn't take off their coat and fight if anyone said a word against Tom Crowley and that included you and me. I borrowed $1,350 off him one time to furnish my house when I first got married. He said "what the hell are you furnishing the Palace Hotel"? but he gave me that money and I was only making $15 per week and he didn't know when he would get it back but I made it after a number of years. He treated me like a strict father would and I thank him for it today because I had other ideas that maybe would have made a bum out of me. At the Red Stacks ,when the "Sea Eagle" sank, he paid the wives of the crew members that were lost a full check every month to support them and their children. He paid some the men that were out on strike against him to keep them from losing their homes etc. He always denied this until you put him on the spot and then he would say"well what are you going to do, let them starve. Everybody don't know the good side of Tom Crowley but you and I do. He just wanted you to know the value of a dollar and to learn to work for what you get. Hard work never hurt any of us. He bailed many guys out of jail when their friends deserted them. This included some of the Union Chiefs like Merryweather who would get drunk and get himself in jail. He was tough but under all that he had a heart as big as a football.

I thought that this girl who was writing about Tom would like this information as I don't know just when I can get up that way.

Tom had them all beat for brains both on the waterfront and up town too. He always gave us advice such as to observe things and get them in your head. When coming down the bay in our launch we were to watch the masts of anchored ships and to be sure not to miss a letter"C" that may be hoisted up on the masthead calling for a launch to take a captain ashore. He would send me down to the end of Howard Street wharf sometimes to look around the bay then he would ask me what ships I saw to test my memory. He knew what ships were there because he could see them from his house in the morning. He always said "take the initiative always and don't wait for someone else to tell you what to do. " He would tell me never to lie or steal as he had no use for a liar or a thief and you know that Willie.

Bill Gately had a launch as you remember and he kept it at Vallejo Street wharf where our boat house was. He used this launch in competition to Crowley in taking captains to and from the ships but he slept in Crowley's Boathouse and used his facilities. Tom made sure that Bill got his share of the business. Most big companies kick the small guy out.

I went into the old Launch Warrior one night with a lighted lantern and I set the boat afire. The gas tank was leaking and caught onto the lantern. I hid out at home and told my folks that I would be fired. Tom call my folks up a few days later and told them to send me down as he had another boat for me to burn up.

Tom was a fellow that we all loved and feared at the same time .He put the whip over all of us and he liked us better if we would fight back. He felt sorry for a guy that didn't have the guts but he had plenty to make up for all of us.

I remember one time when the fleet was anchored out in the bay and I was stationed at the Crowley float with Jim Sennott collecting 25 cents from the crowds of sailors coming in from the battleships and making change as fast as I could not to miss anyone. When I got home I found some small change in my pockets that belonged to the company. In the morning I went into the back office and was dropping it into the canvas sack on the floor when Tom walked in and said "what the hell are you doing Mac?" I told him about the change that I took home by mistake and he said" Mac put that sack of money in the back of the horse and buggy and take it up to the Bank Of California and get a receipt for it. I asked him as to how much was there. He said" I don't know, let them count it as that is there business"

We always worked hard and long hours when the fleet was in and were happy to do it because we were all just one big family with a good man to guide us.

Tom Crowley No 3

You know that Tom had some some real smart answers to questions put to him . We were eating at the Pacific Coast Club down here one time and I told Tom that it was good Friday and asked him about ordering some fish. He said "No I want a steak" when the waiter came around he said "Waiter give me a nice steak but cover it up with fish so I won't see it.

At the old boathouse one time I went in and asked Tom if I could draw $10. He said ' sit down and wait until we take in ten dollars.

We were talking about partners one time and he said "Mac when you take on a partner you take on a boss.

We run out of tugboats one day down here when Tom was on a visit and I told Tom that if I received another order I don't have the tugs to do the job. Tom said" If you get a quick order just tell them that you don't take tugboats off the shelf".

One time a shipowner was after Tom for damage done to the ship by the tug. Tom said" We don't insure your ships we only tow them. Tom didn't care much for Dan Hanlon who had a shipyard in Oakland Creek. When Dan died Tom went to the funeral. I asked Tom why he went when he didn't like Hanlon. He said" I just went to make sure that they planted him.

One time we were writing down are order in the club dining room and Tom was doing the writing. He said"What do you want for desert Mac? and I said "make it Rhubarb Pie" Tom said"take apple because I can't spell Rhubarb/

A fellow did Tom a service one time and after 6 months he sent a bill and Tom held up payment for three months. The fellow asked Tom what was holding up the payment and Tom said" It took you 6 months to send me the bill and I paid it in half the time that it took you to send it.

He was looking at a tug one time over at Craig's Shipyard and he asked Craig as to what he wanted for it Craig said that he wanted $100,000 for her. Tom offered him $25,000. Craig was much put out at Tom's price and asked Tom why $25,000. Tom said "You were rediculous one way so I thought that I would be rediculous the other way.

Tom at the request of a certain business man in San Pedro gave him a loan of $100. I told Tom that this fellow was a dead beat and would not pay him back. He said"I hope that he doesn't pay me back because if he does he will borrow $500 next time.

Tom was quite a fellow and there will never be another like him.

I can write more about Tom if this lady thinks that this is the information that she wants.

Hope that you and May are in good health

Best regards

Mac

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SAN PEDRO TUG BOAT COMPANY

RED STACK TUGS

SAN PEDRO, CALIFORNIA

TELEPHONES
TERMINAL 2-1158
2-1159

OFFICE
BERTH 88
P. O. 549

December 24,1968

Miss Ruth Teiser
932 Vallejo St
San Francisco, California

Dear Miss Teiser,

Your letter of December 16 at hand and I am glad that the information that I sent you about Mr. Crowley was what you wanted. Tom was an exceptional man with not much schooling but much worldly knowledge and good common sense.

He was a good hearted fellow and has done many kind things for people. I can remember one time when his Tug "Sea Eagle" was lost at sea and 17 men never came home. He told their wives to come to his office on the end of every month and collect their husband's full check. For a long time the wives made the monthly visits .

Tom one time was talking to the warden of Alcatraz Island Prison. He told him that he had found that all the food was brought over to the prison by boat and the fresh water as well. The laundry was sent to the Presidio to wash and delivered back to the Island. He figured that it cost $50 per day to keep each prisoner on the rock. He told the warden that it would save the taxpayer money if he would keep all the men over at the Palace Hotel.

When I first worked for Tom in 1906 he paid me $5.00 per week. I asked him for a raise in pay one time and he said "no because you will only spend it on booze and women anyway." However I did get $7.50 per week later and became a capitalist. You could buy a lot with $7.50 in those days.

Tom was a my house in San Pedro one time and he had been drinking a little and my wife seemed to think that he needed a dose of castor oil. She asked Tom if he would drink a cup of coffee and he agreed. My wife put a tablespoonful castor in the cup of coffee and Tom drank it down. He looked at my wife and said."Helen you sure make a lousy cup of coffee."

I will be up in San Francisco on January 16th should you want to get together with Captain Figari and myself on the 17th either during the day or evening.

Yours truly

W.McGilliv

W.Mc Gillivray

In reference to the beginning of the Crowley Company

Tom crowley Sr; was born over in North Beach under the name of Thomas Banning. . His father died when he was young and his mother married a boatman by the name of David Crowley. Dave Crowley had two sons, Dave and Jack Crowley. Tom Banning changed his name to Tom Crowley and found a job working for H.S.Crocker Company which I believe is still in business in San Francisco. Tom soon followed his step father in the boating business and they would row out to incoming ships to obtain the meat and grocery order for a butcher shop owned by a fellow by the name of Fink. When a sailing ship, coming through the gate, was going fast they would toss a large hook into the rigging with a line on it and the other end fast to the Whiteall boat as they called them. Old Dave Crowley was always known as Hook'er On Crowley.

Later on Mr.Fink got the idea of getting a launch for Mr. Crowley to beat his competitors in the same business. A launch was bought and worked out of the Crowley Boathouse a Vallejo Street Wharf. Young Tom Crowley liked the idea and saved his money and bought the launch himself. Later on he bought another launch and more boats after that'as he was taking sailors aboard ships and stores as well as towing barges and pilings to build new docks. His half brothers, Dave and Jack went into the business with him and the elderly Mr. Crowley retired as he was afraid of gasoline launches. He said that they may blow up. Tom Crowley opened another office at the foot of Howard Street and bought a shipyard in Oakland. He built barges there and the Crowley Launch & Tugboat Company was a going concern. He built double decked boats for the Worlds Fair and obtained a concession at the yacht Harbor there. I run one of the double deckers and some of the other boats that were stationed therefor the full period of the fair.

Tom was not very friendly with the owners of the Red Stack Towboat Company and they would not sell out to Crowley for any amount. Crowley found a party who the Red Stack people did not know and this party made a deal which passed the Red Stacks over to Crowley. When Tom Crowley walked into the Red Stacks one morning and told then that he was the new owner they just about fainted.

At this point Tom Crowley owned the Red Stacks with a few other stockholders , the Crowley Launch & Tugboat Company and a shipyard including I5 steam Tugs, I0 heavy duty launches, 6 large barges and a nice horse and buggy.

Note- You may have many more questions to ask me and I can answer some by mail and the balance when I get up there. Jack and Dave Crowley died at about the age of 60 and by this time young Thomas B.Crowley was coming along and as you know is now in charge. Tom Crowley SR, was one of the greatest and most practible men I have ever met . We were all his kids and we worked for him as though we were partners in the company.

W.Mc Gillivray

January 13, 1969

Dear Miss Treiser,

Your letter of December 31 received and the appointment at Captain Figari's home seems okey if nothing else comes up. I thought that I would give you some information on the loss of the Tug "Sea Eagle". She was a large sea-going steam tug purchased by Mr. Crowley from the Southern Pacific R.R. Her former name was the "Collis";named after Collis Huntington who was at that time president of the S.P.Co.

A Captain Gove was her master at this time. She was despatched to tow the Schr."Aeola" from San Francisco to Coos Bay and was to stay in at Coos Bay for some time to work up there. I was a member of the crew and left her along with the chief engineer because our homes were in San Francisco. The chief was layed off and I was transferred to another tug . The "Sea Eagle" ran into a gale going up the coast and the schooner set sail to assist the tug up the coast. The tug paid out about 1,500 feet of 2 inch cable from her towing engine and as the wind caught the sails of the schooner she sheered off to port and placed a heavy strain on the Eagle's towing engine. The strain was too much and the towing engine pulled out of the deck leaving a 12 x 12 foot hole in the tug's deck. She soon filled up with water and sank in a matter of minutes. 17 men went down with her. A week went by and we heard nothing from the "Sea Eagle"and one day a beachcomber found her name board on beach north of Pt.Reyes. We knew the worst then. Some time later the schooner sailed into Coos Bay and told us the story.

Captain Gove was born on a sailing ship of which his father was master, however his father did not want his son to be a sailor so he sent him to college and he became a dentist. After a time he decided that he wanted to back to the sea and he worked his way up on the towboats.

Mr.Beede who was the engineer that was fired for not staying with the "Sea Eagle" soon was back working on the tugs. I met him in San Francisco one day and he told me that he was 90 years old and in good health. He would have died at about 30 had he went north on the Eagle and I would have gone to an early grave too and a wet one at that.

Yours truly

W. Mc Gillivray

W.Mc Gillivray

Excuse my typing.

Jan 14 1969

Dear Miss Teiser,

A little more about Tom Crowley. A way back in 1920 Tom read about a notorious Roy Gardener who was just released from Alcatraz after doing a long term for train robbery. Tom was running excursions around the bay at that time and he located Roy and gave him a job as speeler on his boats, As they passed around Alcatraz Roy told the passengers of his experience there which made a hit and Roy also printed books of his life and sold them to the people. Roy broke out of many prisons but later turned good, however one morning he took his life in his hotel bedroom and that was it. I had the pleasure of meeting him.

Later on a convict ship came over from England and anchored in the bay. Tom thought that it would be good to run passengers out to her to see the torture chambers etc. This he did and it drew many San Francisco people. Tom sent two men down to the Ferry Building at the foot of Market street dressed in convict stripes and put black rubber balls and chains on their feet. This did draw the attention of crowds of people who bought tickets from these would-be-convicts.

Tom was drinking one time and I wanted to get him to straighten up and I induced him to come into the drug store with me and get to get a good double milkshake under his belt. He took one suck on the straw and said" What the hell is this"? I told him that it was a chocolate milkshake. He said then"this is murder let us get out of here". Either he or I could drink a quart of whiskey down with out making a face but a milkshake, that was for babies. That was hard to take.

When I was a kid working for Tom he told me how to get my mooring lines for my launch instead of him buying them. He said "When you go alongside a ship to pick up the captain tell them to throw you the end of a line to make your boat fast to hang,on. When I was to let go I was to tell the sailor on the ship to throw off my line up there which he would do and I would have a new headline. One time I was fooled. I told the sailor to let go my line and he said" what line? this is part of our ship's rigging and I just passed you the end down to hold you until the captain came. Of course I apologized.

I thought ,one time that I wanted to be a pilot on a San Francisco Ferryboat and before applying for the job I thought that I had better get a letter from Tom. I went in the office and asked Tom for a letter and he said "a letter for what" I said" a letter as to my ability" and he said "what the hell ability have you got"? That was enough for me so I stayed on with Tom and let good enough alone. Tom did think that a little experience would do me good and he sent me out to China as a sailor on a ship in which he was interested in. I was back under his watchful eye on my arrival home.

Yours truly

Tom Crowley Continued

When I was running one of the large passenger boats that we were using down at the 1915 Fair Grounds, I was short of life preserers and I advisedTom of this fact. He told me to run the boat down to the Pacific Mail Dock and that he would call the boss down there, a Mr. Chisholm, and tell him to give me 100 life belts out of his storeroom on the dock. I did this and it seems that either Chisholm or Crowley would trust each other about as far as you could throw a bull by the tail. I saw Mr. Chisholm and he opened the storeroom door on the dock. Mr Crowley had told Mr. Chisholm that he only wanted 100 lifebelts but Crowley told me to get an extra 100 when Chisholm left to go up in his office. It didn't work that way because Chisholm counted them as I took them out. On returning to the dock Tom said " Did you get the extra 100 "? I told him how Mr Chisholm watched me and counted them out. Tom just answered me in three words "The dirty crook". I never could figure which one was the crook. They were both pretty slick customers.

San Diego Transportation Co

We were down in San Diego looking over their marine equipment with the idea of buying them out, which we did some months later. Tom in speaking to an engineer on one of the tugs asked the engineer if a certain barge there did keep busy hauling oil. The engineer said "Mister I don't know who you are but if you had the money that was earned by that barge you wouldn't have to work any more. Tom never let on who he was and that engineer didn't know that he was talking to his new boss.

In a union meeting one time the union chief in defending one of Tom'S deckhands said "This fellow must be a good man as he has worked for you for 10 years" Tom's answer was" No,put it the other way, I have put up with him for 10 years and now I am fed up with him"

Mr. Crowley owned a number of scow schooners in the old days. They carried coal for the Government and one of the scow captains would load coal all day on his vessel and then turn in his bunk and go to sleep coal dust and all. He would never take a bath. Tom ,in dicussing him one time told me that the only use that the scow captain had for water was to sail in it. These scow schooners sailed on the bay for many years hauling hay,coal etc.

Yours truly

Wm Gilling

copy

Mr Cappy Escher,
Crowley Launch & Tugboat Co
Pier 50, San Francisco, Cal

Dear Cappy,

I am dropping you a few little stories about Tom Crowley as I remember them back in the early days. I believe that he was baptized in the Saint Francis Church on Vallejo Street in the year 1875. I believe that ,in his heart, he was a religious man all his life but nowone knew it. He has talked religion to me many times and told me that I should keep going to church on Sundays as it was good for me. Many times in the old days the Catholic Priests would come to see him at the office and they always got twenty dollars before they left. I was glad to see the crucifix over his casket and the priest saying the few words as he did, as that was the way that Tom would wanted ,it.

To change the subject from religion to business, Tom was always a very generous man as a young man and he took care of many people that needed help. On the other hand he liked to fight and he would take on anyone that was looking for a fight.

Some of the people that lived off Tom and took advantage of a cot in the upper floors of the boathouses at Vallejo Street and Howard Street were the following: Old Ben who was stranded ashore from a whaler. Ben made a few fenders now and then for the launches. Minor Malaney and Monk Mc Abdrews who would make a trip as deckhand if they were sober. The Desmond Brethers who had a Whitehall Boat and would run lines for ships. They used Bourbon for drinking-water and we called them the alcohol brothers. Charlie Carle a Mexican who made a few fenders at Valleje Street Wharf and drank his share of the wine. He brought in his cousin who would get full of wine and stand up against the boathouse in the sun and go to sleep. Bill Gately who had a half-house launch at another dock and took captains ashore from ships in competion to Tom. Tom invited him to come down to Vallejo Street and work off his float to the surprise of Gately. It wasn't long before Gately set up light house keeping upstairs in the boathouse but Tom just said that the poor guy has to eat. Tom made sure that they all got their eats and a bed but he had a hard time keeping them out of bars instead of using the money for food. Jack the Grapler had to sleep under the wharf on a shelf that he built there as there was no more room in the Inn. A spring tide one night set his bed adrift and it floated out of the slip with Jack on it and full of booze. It was a float that drifted into the piles under the dock and Jack had nailed it there and used it for sleeping quarters. Jack made his living with a skiff and two long poles locating hand trucks and things on the bottom of the bay. A truck backed into a lead of Porter one day and ten cases went overboard. Jack grappled and brought up a case every week-end and got drunk with one of his associates. Tom helped keep Jack alive too. One week he had money and the next week he was broke.

I remember one time when we were hauling hundreds of sailors in from the fleet wich was anchored in the bay. We would collect 25 cents from each sailor and about three of us from the office would nail the sailors as they jumped ashore. We had to make change etc. and one night when I got home I found odd quarters in different pockets in my clothes. In the morning I went into the back office and dropped the money in the canvas money sack. Tom happenend in and said" what are you doing Mac?" I told him and he said "well put that sack of money in the back of the horse and buggy and drive it up to the Bank Of California. I asked him how much was in it and he said" I don't know; let the bank count it as that is their business and bring back a receipt". I was working in the office at that time and Tom gave me a good tongue lashing every morning to keep me on my toes. Jack and Dave got the same thing. I told Tom once that I wanted to get out and get a job some other place but he told me to get the hell out in that outer office and that I always had quit on the end of my tongue. Sometimes I tried staying home and he would send Dave up after me and I had to go back.

I went up to stay with Botch up on the Russian River one time and stayed at an Italian Hotel at Gerneville . We had good dinners and lots of wine. Tom send Dave up after me and I got Dave into the party and there were some girls there too. Dave then didn't want to go home and Tom had to send another fellow up after Dave and me. I was on the way home and took hell from Tom and went to work.

We had a British Convict Ship come into the harbor one time and and she was put on exibition out in the bay. The owner got in touch with Tom for launch hire and Tom gave him the idea that he should dress a couple of his men in convict clothes and cap and with a big black rubber ball attached to their legs with rubber chains and send them down to the Ferry Building and let them mix up with the crowds down there. This was done and a steady stream of people marched down to the Crowley Dock and paid 50 cents to go out to the ship and look at the torture chambers Etc. This went on for about three weeks and Tom made good on his idea.

One time Tom told me to take the double decker No I8 and go up to the Pacific Mail Dock and see the boss(Bill Chishom) and borrow 200 life preservers. He had already phoned Chishom about this. I did so and I remembered that Tom also told me to slip an extra 50 life preservers aboard my boat while I was at it. Bill Chishom was wise and came down and counted the jackets out for me himself. When I got back to the dock Tom asked me if I got the extra 50 and I told him that Chishom was there counting them out. Tom just said three words " the dirty crook".

Business was Tom's life and he talked business until the last. When I was up to the house one day as he sat in his chair he kept telling me that the Red Stacks were on the strike. The strike was settled but he did not believe that it was, I called Don Fuller and told him that if he had a live boat at the dock to send it up past Tom's window so that that he could see for himself. Don told me that a boat was on her way from Oakland at the present time. I pointed the boat out to Tom and he was satisfied.

Tom Crowley No 2

I have talked about these fellows drinking however they did have their sober moments and were of some use to Tom. They didn't always have the money to get the liquor although waterfront wiskey was only ten cents a good size shot.

Some times when the alcohol brothers were being towed back from Oakland after running lines for a ship, the fireman on the Red Stack would slide back to the stern bitt on his belly and cut them loose and in that case they would have to put out the oars and pull their boat all the way back to Vallejo Street Wharf. Tom had a good sense of humor and always got a kick out of these things. I have known Tom to bail union heads out of jail for being drunk when their union wouldn't do it. He many times had to battle for Dave Crowley when Dave was twice the size of Tom.

When the men at the Red Stacks were on the strike he gave the pickets shelter on one of the tugs to keep them out of the rain and ordered steaks for them and fed them up. The Unions didn't like this but Tom told them that he couldn't see them getting all wet out there for no reason. He gave some of the tugcaptains money to keep them from losing their homes which they were buying on time. When our Tug "Sea Eagle" sank and I4 men were drown he told the wives of the men to come to the office and get their husband's check until they were able to take care of themselves and children. This they did.

We had some tough guys running the launches in those days and one of them was Kongo King who was known as king of the Barbary Coast. He worked nights up on Pacific Street to keep peace around the dance halls and then he would run newspapers to Oakland with the Launch "Guide" at 2 AM He would always bring some dancehall girls along to throw the bundles of papers on the dock in Oakland. I would use the Launch "Sentinel" on second load and he would bring girls for me at times. Kongo liked Tom and would fight for him at the drop of the hat. We all liked Tom though he was giving us hell all the time. time. With all the hell he couldn't drive us away. He was just like a strict father to all of us and we all knew we were going to eat if we stuck with him whether we were working or not. When I got married I bought a house full of furniture wholesale and had to pay cash. The bill was $I,375 and I went to Tom and asked him for the money. He looked at the bill and said" what the hell are you furnishing, the Palace Hotel." He paid the bill and I was a number of years paying it back as I only received $IO per week.

Tom always liked kids and at times I would get a letter from school kids asking for information on tugboats. Tom would say" be sure and answer that because it is very important to that boy. On the other hand Tom always disliked a person who did not tell the truth and didn't want them in his employ.

The night watchman at Howard Street, one night, broke open the money box and took about $IOO and I was sleeping on the bench down below and heard the banging on the box but didn't think anything of it until the theft was discovered in the morning. They caught the fellow and Tom got most of the money back but although he fired him he refused to let the police lock him up. I was surprised as the fellow(Frank Eldridge) was with us a number of years.

Tom Crowley No 3

Tom always said "I don'T trust a fellow that has known me for 6 months and still does not call me by my first name. When a shipowner would accuse our tug of causing some damage to his ship or the dock Tom would say"we are not an insurance company and we do not insure your ship but we only assist it at a reduced rate.

Tom loaned Captain Curtiss, of Merritt & Chapman Company, $250 one time, down here and I told Tom that Curtiss was a dead beat and that he would not get the money back. Tom said that he knew that and he didn't want the money back because if he paid it back he would want $1,500 next time.

At the Fair Grounds in 1915 a fellow had a little train that was pulled by a steam locomotive that this fellow built himself. He always wanted to run the engine and left it to another fellow to collect the fares. Many people would ride the train as it was good transportation. However as it stopped at our yacht Harbor landing this fellow asked Tom why he didn't make any profit after paying his concession fee. Tom told him that he was on the wrong end of the train. Well this fellow got a young boy to run the engine and he collected the fares. He later told Tom that his profit had gone up considerable.

Tom's career was a long hard fight but he never gave up and we all owe a lot to him because he had what it took when the other fellows threw in the sponge because they couldn't take it. Peterson Launch Company, Johnson Launch Company, Wilder Launch Company and others including the S.O.& M.Towboat Company. The only people that disliked Tom were the ones that couldn't outsmart him. It was a matter of jealousy on their part.

Tom was down at my house one time and he was drinking and my wife thought that she may try to get a cup of coffee into him flavored with Castor Oil for his bowels. He agreed to drink the coffee and swallowed it down. He looked at my wife and said " Helen you sure make a lousy cup of coffee."

I still can'T believe that Tom is gone as I thought that he would go on to 100. The last time I saw him I took him by the hand as he sat in the chair and he looked at me and mumbled something but his eyes seemed to say that it was all over and there is nothing that can be done about it. As I walked back over the hills to my hotel I kept thinking that this was maybe my last visit to 30 Florence Street and as I lay in bed just thinking of those days when I knew Tom in his early 30s I still couldn't believe that my best friend was due to pass at any time now.

Tom always thought a lot of his mother and I told him one time of me taking his mother out to a battleship and show her around. I saw the tears roll down his cheeks. He was good to his step father too. He gave him a check every month to do nothing. However old Dave was a nice old fellow too. He thought more of Tom than he did of his own sons Dave and Jack Crowley. The old fellow used to ride with me on the launch when I was towing Red rock over from Fort Baker to build roads at the fair grounds.

Well Cappy maybe if you let Tom read this it may may make feel bad but that is up to you. He no doubt misses his dad more than any of us and I know we old timers will always remember him for what a good man he was.

Yours tryly

W. McGillivray

Excuse my poor typing and spelling.

March 27,1970

Dear Miss Teiser,

Your answer to my letter received and contents noted. I can't see how anyone could be interested in a career such as mine as there is nothing outstanding in my life that hadn't been in the lives of other people, but I can give you some of the mile-posts if you would be interested.

I was born in San Francisco and my mother and father were also born there. When I lived in the Western Addition and was just about finished the 7th grade in the Hamilton Gramar School the earthquake and fire came along and that was the end of my schooling. I was to go to the Lowel High School but it burnrd down and I had a long wait therefor I drifted down toward the waterfront and a young man by the name of Tom Crowley was moving his furniture from San Francisco to Oakland to get away from the fire. He saw me on the dock and said "Hey kid give me a hand here. I had a chance to ride over to Oakland on his launch and help unload. We also took a few passengers back to San Francisco as no one was allowed to come from Oakland to San Francisco at that time. (on the ferryboats)

Mr. Crowley told me that if I came back down to the waterfront he would give me a job. A few days later I came back and he let me learn how to run a launch and had me load freight that was to go to ships in the stream. In a short time he allowed me torun a small launch called the "Spy" which made me very proud. I received $5.00 per week which seemed a lot of money for a fifteen year old kid. I soon was in command of a larger tug and received $7.50 per week. The hours were long and the work was hard but Mr. Crowley was like a father to all of us and we had about ten launches. I believe that most of the odd things that happened to us during my period was written up in that marine magazine that I gave you to look over. I had many experiences during my period with the launch company but you have no doubt, read them in the magazine clippings. The World's Fair came along in 1915 and we painted all the big launches white and operated them from the yacht harbor at the fair grounds. I had one of the double decker boats which had a capacity of 250 passengers. Some of the girls from the Food Products Building would get free rides on our boats and in turn we would get free samples every day of food and we never did go hungry. We would get soup in one place, Tomales in another Scons in another, Lounys Chocolate in another and the girls would never let on that they knew us. It was a great fair. When our work day was over we would stay in the fair grounds until they closed. A couple years past after the fair closed and I went back to running my boat on the city front and up the Sacramento River. We had some experiences on the river which may be worth telling however I am not sure as to just sort of tales you would be looking for, However I will be back up that way one of these days and we can talk it over.

Yours truly,

W. McGillivray

January 29,1971

Miss Ruth Teiser
932 Vallejo St
San Francisco, California 94133

Dear Miss Teiser

Your letter received and I am glad that you have been able to make something out of it as it was the regular routine for Willie and me and we thought nothing of it. As far as I am concerned it is all right to retype the whole interview or what ever you see fit.

I was just thinking of the time that I was captain of the Red Stack Steamtug "Pilot" and running up the Sacramento River with a barge in which we loaded fresh water and delivered it to the Southern Pacific Railroad at Benicia for use in their locomotives. We would generally make fast to the river bank at night just above Rio Vista and go back down in the morning.

There was a barge ferry which transported hosedrawn vehicles from one side of the river to the other. I had noticed that ,at night, if the ferry was on the RioVista side of the river and a team was on the other side, the driver of the team would find a fish horn attached to a pole there and he would blow the horn and the man on the ferry would hear this and haul his ferry over the the other side by means of a wire on a hand drum and pick up his fare ($ 0.25. This horn I would hear a number of times in the stillness of the night. This was in the year 1918. It seemed like another world after leaving noisy San Francisco.

There was a river steamer called the "Modoc" at that time that ran from San Francisco to Sacramento. The engineer on that vessel had been on there for many years. One time as the steamer was plowing along at about midnight with a new pilot at the wheel and 50 passengers and freight aboard and the pilot came to a place on the river where there were two forks. He became confused as to which one to take so he quickly called the engineer on the speaking tube and the engineer took a look and told him which way to go. The captain never did know that the pilot had lost his way. The young pilot later became captain of the "Modoc".

Best regards

Thomas Gillming

March 8,1971

Dear Miss Teiser,

Everything seems to be okey except for a few items which I corrected. There are a number of stories that Figari and I may have forgotten and I may think of them no doubt in the near future.

There was a time back in 1905 and for a few years after,when large four masted schooners would not take a tug at the entrance to the Golden Gate and if the wind was right they would sail right through the gate and up the city front and anchor off Mission Rock which was south of the ferry Building.

Bay scow schooners many times would sail right up to the dock in order to save the price of a launch to dock them. They would sail up close to the dock and quickly jump in their skiff and run a small line over to the dock, making it fast to a dock pile The other end of the line would be taken to the capstan on the bow of the scow and they would then heave the scow up to its berth. The sails would be dropped of course before the line was run to the dock.

There was a submerged rock off Folsom Street pier called "Anita Rock" and one of those seagoing schooners while sailing up the bay ran afoul of this rock and Tom Crowley and I went out in one of our heavy duty gasoline tugboats and succeeded in pulling her off. The rock has been removed since.

Yours truly

Tom Gilleney

April 14,1971

Dear Miss Teiser

I don't know if I ever told you about the old Shanghai days. in San Francisco. Way back in the year 1907 I can remember the old sailor's boarding house keepers that would get sailors or citizens alike,stupid drunk and ship them to sea on vessels for a price paid them by the ship-owner. They would pick out a fellow in a barroom and after buying him a lot of cheap whiskey they would tell the fellow that they know a ship captain who wants a man to help him work the ship on a trip to the South sea Islands at good wages and a lot of fun with the girls over at the Islands and all the booze that they can drink. The fellow would agree to go and the he would be taken down to the Crowley Boathouse and would be run out to the ship with a large jug of whiskey just for his pleasure. The ship wasn't going to the South Seas but it was going up to the Arctic to catch whales and would be gone for a period of three years and the pay would be one dollar for the voyage.

Many times a judge in court would sentence a man to make a trip on one of these ships as a punishment. Some of the names of the ships were the "Bowhead", the Thrasher the Narwal and the Belvedere ,all from New Bedford as their home port.

I remember a fellow coming down on the float once to go out to a ship and he had a large jug of whiskey to take aboard with him and he set it down on the float rather hard and the bottom broke out of it and the booze went all over the float. He refused to go out to the the ship until the Red Eye was replaced.

It sometimes took a week to get a full crew of bums aboard these ships at anchor and in the meantime some of them would sober up enough to know that they had been mislead. They would make an attempt to jump over the rail of the ship as we would come alongside with the launch but the mates would beat them back as it was hard to replace these fellows and they were there to stay.

When the ship was full handed and was towed to sea by the tug it was sometimes necessary to drift around off the lightship for 24 hours to get the crew sober so they could get to work and set sails. They were forced to get to work or get a belaying pin over their head.

Well anyway when they would come back after three years in the cold Arctic they were much better men in many ways. It did toughen them up and their whiskers had grown long but they no doubt spent their money(one Dollar) on whiskey again and may have thought that it was all for the best. So let us say that it was the curse of liquor that that got them into all this trouble.

Wm McGillivray

APPENDIX B

"I remember when..." Sketches written by Captain McGillivray and published in the Pacific Work Boat.

The Bight of the Line

After the fairest summer that we've seen in many a season, the old-timers say this winter'll be a wet one. Be that as it may, it was fun while it lasted, and now time for all hands to get back to work, that is, except of course, for yours truly.—Scuttle Butt Pete.

YOUR perambulatin' pikepoler answered the call of deep water this summer and wandered off to the shores of the big saltchuck. Within earshot of the booming Pacific surf, Old Scutt hove to at Westhaven.

The first familiar face to bob out of a pilot house was on the troller *Osprey*. It was the round, genial countenance of Norm Delfel, who looks more at home when leaning on the half-door of a galley. His culinary art has graced the galleys of the *Catherine*, *Christine*, *Barbara Foss* and *Foss* 18.

Come spring, though, and Norm forsakes the fireside for the briny deep. He hasn't succumbed to the lure of the off-shore tuna run, however. Norm confides that the last fifteen years have made the wave crests higher and the bow of the *Osprey* lower.

A couple of pikepolers saw the summer sunshine from hospital windows. Denny Mahoney of the *P & T Pioneer* put in a long, painful session with a leg operation. Captain Eugene Hansen of the *Cutty Sark*, former Columbia River pilot vessel and for many years a fish packer on Puget Sound, tangled with a V-belt pulley and shortened a couple of fingers.

Another Captain Hansen, better known as "North Pole," retired in August from his command of the powder boat *Dupont*. His former engineer, Erling Skogen, has taken over. "North Pole" is far from inactive, however. He has several deals brewing. Fair sailing for many years to come, Carl.

One more piling buster has gone back on his vow to quit the boats for good. A year on the beach was enough for Ed Goodman of Everett. He's standing watches on the *George W* with Captain "Poley" McCormick. They always come back, Ed. You just can't get that nice, comfortable salt-crusted feeling in a garage.

Old Scutt is happy to see the launching of the fund-raising drive by the Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society to provide a marine wing at the Museum of History and Industry. All you pikepolers who will someday want to show your grandchildren relics from your salty past should get solidly behind Captain Floyd Smith, chairman of the drive.

Now here is one of about 16 "I remember when" sketches which Capt. McGillivray has written during a few quiet moments at his office in San Pedro Tug & Barge Co. . . . We, the Cap and I, have talked for sometime about putting these in "Pacific Work Boat." He has been on the San Francisco and San Pedro waterfront for more than 40 years, and can probably reminisce about more things than you and I will ever know.

The Tugless Carfloat

It was along in about the year 1920 when I was mate on the old steamtug *Sea Witch*. One afternoon we were towing a carfloat from Oakland to Lombard Street Slip down at North Beach, San Francisco. We had 14 loaded freightcars aboard the barge and Captain Jacobsen was in charge of the tug and its tow. Jacobsen took his usual position on top of one of the box cars where he could give signals to the tug and have an unobstructed view.

It was strong flood tide when we arrived off Lombard Street and we went well up to windward with our tow before swinging around and lining up for the slip. As we approached the opening, running before the tide and wind, I could see that the barge was going to make the slip but that the tug would not. The tug was doomed to hang up on the wing of the slip and would surely part all her line.

Capt. Wm. McGillivray

At this point I instructed the men on deck to cast off the tug's lines and I quickly backed the tug clear of her barge. Now the carfloat was sailing into the slip at a good rate of speed with the wind and tide pushing her along.

Jacobsen, not knowing that the tug was gone, blew two toots of his mouth whistle and when he noticed that the barge did not slacken its speed, he looked around and waved his hands and shouted "back her up", but no tug; he couldn't believe his eyes.

The barge struck one side of the slip and then the other and Jacobsen hung on for dear life. It finally stopped right under the apron and although the cars rocked and rolled, no apparent damage was done.

Jacobsen's face lost some of its ruddy complection for a time but everything ended all right so we all thought it best to say no more about it.

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Capt. Wm. McGillivray has written a series of about 16 "I remember when" sketches during such quiet moments as he finds in his office at San Pedro Tug & Barge Co. You'll enjoy reading his recollections below, about:

"The ship that got in the way"

IN the early days the newspapers were hauled from San Francisco to Oakland on the Crowley Launches, as the *Examiner* and the *Chronicle* had no printing facilities on the Oakland side at the time. The Oakland ferryboats stopped running at midnight and the papers did not get off the press until 2 a.m.

On one of these trips the launch operator delivered his usual 200 bundles of papers at the foot of 7th Street in Oakland, then proceeded on back to San Francisco.

He had been on duty all night, and when he cleared Oakland Creek and reached the open bay, he pulled up his stool and got comfortably seated at the wheel and it wasn't long before he dropped off into slumberland.

In a short time he was rudely awakened by a crash which knocked him off the stool. He proceeded out on deck to take some observations and found that he had struck a large vessel. He looked up at the towering ship and noticed a man's head peering over the rail.

The launch operator, doing a little quick thinking, bellowed "Where the heck do you think you're going?" The man on deck replied "I am not going any place. This is the Transport *Crook* which has been anchored here for the past 3 years and I am the ship's watchman."

The forward deck of the launch was badly opened up but the ship was okey. The launchman still had to answer to his boss, for the damage to the launch, so he carefully placed some tools around the water pump and told the boss that his engine had lost its circulating water and he had left the wheel to make repairs to the pump, when the launch got off her course.

Some time later (when the heat was off) the launch captain told some of us boys the real story. I guess that any one of us would have done the same thing as he, under the circumstances.

"Northwest" joins Coos Bay charter fleet

Tom Wall of Seattle Marine Sales & Service recently reported the delivery of the 42-foot *Northwest* to Emery Hanson's Landing at Coos Bay. *Northwest*, powered by General Motors Series 3-71 marine diesel with a 2½-to-1 Twin Disc reduction, will keep her same name in her new work as a member of what is now a 5-boat charter fleet.

Northwest got enough of a shakedown cruise in her 50-hour delivery trip from Seattle out through the Straight of Juan de Fuca and south on the Washington and Oregon coasts. Two skippers went with Emery Hanson on the trip, passing through storms at Cape Flattery and off the coast at the Columbia River.

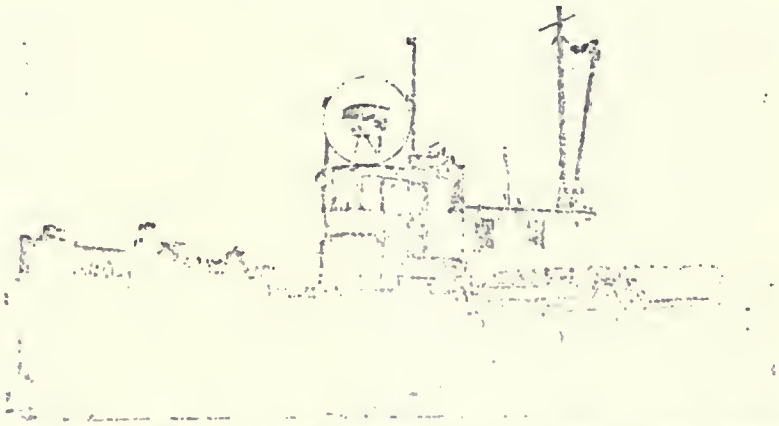
Built as a Wheeler yacht, the *Northwest* has 40-watt RCA ship-to-shore, and Naud controls.

Celilo canal shut to build new dam oil cargos are pumped over site

A 41-year pageant of Colum River towboat history closed on last night of 1956 with the final c ing of The Dalles-Celilo canal, an mile waterway through which so 75,000 passages have been made, through which about 12,600,000 t of shipping have passed since 1 alone.

A new and higher dam at T Dalles is being completed, and w its last extension is made, river t boats and barges are cut off. Barg companies pump petroleum carg past the former Big Eddy lock, tween barges at either side of it, d ing the first two months; then t method too will be temporarily hal while the entire old canal is floo and a new lock prepared at the n height. The new lock will be on Washington side of the channel, a is to be opened about April 1.

The Dalles-Celilo canal was fi opened to navigation May 6, 19 and had been delayed for years e at that date.



IN the above photo is the "Mahalo," one of five towboats owned by the Garvin Towboat & Barge Company, berthed at Long Beach, Calif. She is one of four boats, of a fleet of five for Garvin, recently equipped with a Bendix MR-3B marine radars.

The Garvin company is now working on contract to tow barges of rock from Santa Catalina Island for use in building breakwaters at Redondo Beach and Long Beach. The operators of the towboat company report that with Bendix radars aboard, the boats can continue operations without interruption by the fogs which occur so frequently along the Pacific coast.

The "Mahalo" is powered with two General Motors 6-71s and is generally skippered by Henry Rosenbaum.

I remember when

A series of humorous recollections, sketches written by Capt. Wm. McGillivray of San Pedro Tug Boat Company.

Number three:

The Runaway Launch

THE Crowley & Peterson Launch Companies had floats located at the bulkhead at Howard Street Wharf, San Francisco. They operated a fleet of heavy duty launches which were used for general bay work. It was the common practice for the operators to warm up their engines early in the morning to get their boats ready for the business of the day.

On a particular morning along in the year 1915, an operator was warming up his engine, with his clutch engaged and his propeller turning over. The ferryboats kicked up more or less of a swell in that slip, and the launch was pitching up and down and tugging at her lines.

The launch operator proceeded to the boathouse on the bulkhead to get some supplies for his boat. He would only be gone for a few minutes and he was sure that the launch would be all right when he returned.

When he came back he was surprised to find that the boat had disappeared. What was left of her mooring lines dangled over the side of the float.

There was nothing that the operator could do except wait for developments. An hour and a half passed, and then they received a telephone call from the Red Stack Towboat Company at Vallejo Street Wharf. They stated that the launch had steamed into their slip and wedged herself between the bow of the tug *Sea Queen* and the dock, landing on a cushion of the tug's headlines and bow bumper.

They said that no one was aboard the launch and that the boat's propeller was still kicking ahead at a lively clip. The distance between Howard Street Wharf and Vallejo Street, where the launch finally stopped, is about one mile but this particular launch must have taken a detour as it took her one and a half hours to reach her destination.

It was miraculous how this boat worked her way through all the morning bay traffic without a mishap. It was possible that vessels blew passing signals to her but received no answer. Well, nevertheless, the launch was returned to her berth and no damage was done, so as they say ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

I remember when

You'll chuckle over this series of reminiscent sketches written for PWB by Capt. Wm. McGillivray of San Pedro Tug Boat Company, and here is

Number four:

The Involuntary Drydocking of the Tug "Liberty"

THE old steam tug *Liberty* was about 75 feet in length and was one of a fleet of tugs operated by the Red Stacks in San Francisco.

One bright morning in the year 1918 this tug was towing a flat barge, which was heavily loaded with rock. They were progressing very nicely down the bay when the barge started listing and acting peculiar.

It was evident to the tug captain that she was taking water. He stopped the tug's engines to take the headway off the barge, but it did no good. The next thing that the skipper knew the barge took a dive and disappeared beneath the surface.

She turned over, dumped her load, then came back up again, bottom side up directly under the tug. There was the old *Liberty* grounded on top of her tow, with a 45 degree list and helpless to do anything about it.

Some of the boys at the Red Stack Dock heard the *Liberty's* call for help and sent a tug to the rescue.

Kelp cutters trimmed

Two kelp cutters in San Diego have recently been given maritime attention: Shepherd Marine installed a Bendix recorder, DR 14 on the *El Capitan*. Another Kelco kelp cutter was treated with Dimecote, and then given a coating of Amercoat.

Here are the six tugs of the Allman-Hubble fleet:

Advance—48 feet, powered by Buda model 1879.

Deck Boy—48 feet, powered by a 6-71 General Motors.

E. S. Hubble—abt. 48 feet, powered by a Buda 1879.

Ranger—48-50 feet, powered by D-17000 Caterpillar.

Hubble No. 6—55 feet, powered by 6-110 General Motors.

A. G. Hubble—62 feet, powered by Caterpillar D397.

of two, but has sleeping accommodations for three, along with a fully-equipped galley. Additional equipment includes a pilot-house control, alarm system, and a Buda 6-hp engine, driving a 1½-kw generator, to supply power for the bilge pump and lights.

The Caterpillar diesel was sold through N. C. Marine Co. of Seattle, distributors.

Workout for a new boom boat . . .

SHOWN above is a Hanley-Hydrojet propelled boom pond boat in trial runs. Manufactured by Nichols Boat Works, Hood River, Oregon, this boat is now in use by Peters & McKinnon Logging Co. at Rosburg, Washington. It is a shallow water type; having only some 15 inches draft with 50 gallons of gas aboard. Over-all length is 14 feet, 19 inches, with 6 feet, 6 inches of beam.

There is no propeller or rudder used—instead, a nozzle which extends only 3½ inches below the bottom of the boat. This boat can turn a complete 360 degrees in its own length, it is said, such maneuverability being due to the equal thrust possible in all directions. The need for reverse gear is eliminated in this method. Exclusive distributors in Oregon, Washington, Idaho, Alaska and Northern California for the Hanley-Hydrojet engine is T. B. Cook Engine Co. of Portland, Oregon.

I remember when

You'll chuckle over this series of reminiscent sketches written for PWB by Capt. Wm. McGillivray of San Pedro Tug Boat Company, and here is

Number five:

THE SHIPMASTER THAT KNEW ALL THE TRICKS

WHEN the sailing ships were sighted off the San Francisco Bar in the early days, it was the usual thing for tugs to put out to sea to bargain with the captains of these vessels for a tow into port. The tug captain would generally toss a newspaper aboard, and then get into conversation with the skipper.

One time when I was in charge of the old steamtug "Sea Wolf", I proceeded on one of these missions. In this case, it was a codfisher from Alaska with a full cargo of salted fish. The ship was well off shore but running before a strong wind and making good time. I arrived at the vessel and came up on the starboard quarter and the captain, a young red headed fellow, was on the poop deck. The crew lined up on the rail below and watched the tug with welcome eyes.

After giving the skipper all the shoreside news, I offered to take him in for $500. I advised him that he would be losing the wind before long and it would be dark before he got to the gate. He told me that $100 was all he intended to pay for a tow in.

Keeping my tug abreast of his quarter, I told him also that he would meet ebb tide at the gate and would be carried out to sea again. He still stuck to the $100 and I had to think of something else. This time I told him that I would continue off shore to look for a square rigger that had been reported that morning. He assured me that there was no square rigger out there, but neverthless I swung around and headed out to sea.

I kept watching the ship captain on the poop deck of the codfisher, hoping that he would call me back and accept my offer. But this he didn't, so I decided to turn around again. I was beginning to think that he was a hard man to fool. When I passed by the ship again, I sung out to him, telling him that I was on my way home and would now take him in for $250. He shouted back that $100 was the only offer that he had to make.

I waved him off and kept on going and, as the ship faded away astern of me, I watched through my glasses hoping that the red headed skipper would give up and wave me back.

Nothing happened and as I didn't want to come home empty handed I gave up and returned to the schooner and towed her into port for the sum of $100, after losing most of the day trying to outsmart the skipper.

I met the captain a few days later on California Street. He gave me his side of the story of that tow. He told me that his vessel had been leaking badly on the last five days of his voyage and that his crew was just about exhausted working the hand pumps. He said that he told the men to stop pumping when the tug came along side, so that we would not know that he was in trouble and that as soon as our tug left, the men went back to the pumps again.

He said that he needed a tug at any price, as he didn't think that he could stay afloat another night. He also told me that he knew that the square rigger story was a bluff and that we would be back. He did say that, when we headed for home, he was alarmed but he said that he was just about to hail us back when we swung around on our own accord. Well, we had a drink together on at the corner, and I was glad that I never did tell the story around the waterfront.

terior layout, these five seiners are almost identical. The new *Yankee Girl* is being built with standard turntable rather than power reel, but will use a hydraulic power block. One owner obtained a surplus metal fo-csle hatch, and there are other deviations, but for the most part they are alike down to the last nut and bolt. It will be interesting to see how they perform during the course of the fishing season.

The *Pacific Work Boat* staff photographs which accompany this article may supply you with further information of value.

View of port side of hull shows transducer for sounder, and full length of the Walter Kleen-Flo engine cooling unit.

I remember when

Capt. McGillivray's series continues with a yarn as humorous as the rest, only you'd better hold onto your chair.

Number Six

The Breaking Bar

JUST before World War No. 1, I was running one of the large Crowley gas tugs in San Francisco Bay. The boat, a 65-footer, was called the *Crowley No.* 24." As a rule we did only bay and river towing with this boat, but one dark night, at about 9 p.m., I was ordered to go to sea and meet a new ship that was going through her trial trip outside the heads and to bring the pilot and owners ashore. This was done so the ship could proceed on her way to sea.

I was to meet the vessel in the vicinity of the lightship, and, as the trip sounded interesting to my deckhand and myself, we were soon on our way.

We went out with the last of the ebb tide and, as we passed through the Golden Gate, we were making good time in fairly smooth water. As we cleared Pt. Bonita, heading out through the main channel, the sea started to get lumpy. I closed all the windows in the pilothouse and had the deckhand secure everything on deck, just in case. The seas began to get higher and, as we looked ahead, we saw combers coming at us that seemed to be 20 or 30 feet high. We pressed our hands against the heavy plate glass windows in the pilothouse, hoping to keep them from breaking as tons of water came roiling upon us. We knew now that we were in the midst of a breaking bar and there was no turning back.

We must keep her head to the sea or get rolled over. I wondered if the boat could live through it, or would the engine die and leave us to the mercy of the seas. Our boat stood on end; the waves were mountainous. They were curling and breaking at the crest. Water was coming in everywhere and the pilothouse was flooded. Our headway told me that the engine was still running but we could not hear it with the pounding of the seas which swept us from stem to stern.

We kept our fingers crossed, held on, and when we were just about ready to give up hope we noticed that each succeeding wave seemed to carry a little less fury. Then as quick as it came, it was all over. The ocean was calm except for a lazy swell. What a mistake we had made. When we went out through the gate we had never given the bar a thought. We should have taken the North or South Channels.

Well, we opened up our companionway and took inventory. The bilges were full of water and the engine, though still operating, was dripping wet. We turned on the bilge pumps and continued seaward.

Looking ahead we could see our ship, waiting for us, her running lights gleaming in the night. It wasn't long before we came alongside and took our passengers aboard from a Jacobs ladder swung over the lee side.

We told the pilot of our experience, and he wondered that we were still alive. He instructed us to go through the North Channel on the way back as he had a wife and children waiting for him at home. That little 65-footer was a very good sea boat and I always had a soft spot for the old *No.* 24 from that day on.

275-hp Chryslers for Victor Lee IV

THE *Victor Lee IV*, operating out of Marineland of the Pacific landing, is ready for an early run of game fish. Frank Hubaty, operator of the year-old sport fisher, announces that the boat has been fitted out with new twin Chrysler engines.

Installed by John Pope Marine Service of Wilmington, each engine has 275-hp, and this combination allows a cruising speed of 30 knots. Hubaty reports an easy run to Catalina Island in 50 minutes.

Although the boat can hold more, the parties are limited to 20 persons for comfort. There are bunks below deck for 18. It features a walk-around deck, ideal for anglers.

I remember when . . .

Are you enjoying reading this series of reminiscences by Capt. Wm. McGillivray, as much as we are enjoying presenting them? We hope so, and appreciate the kind comments from readers. Here is one just as good as the rest. Number Seven.

The Tug with the Nine Lives

THE *Sea Prince* was a 75-foot steamtug built in the year 1901 and she was operated on San Francisco Bay with a crew of five men. For some reason or another she was always getting into trouble. Just previous to World War No. 1 she was assisting the S.S. *Graystone Castle* from up river to sea and upon arriving off Alcatraz Island the tugcaptain left the bridge of the steamer, boarded his towboat and started for home. In doing so he cut across the bow of the *Graystone Castle* or at least he tried to cut across. The ship had picked up speed and the tug did not make it. The *Prince* was run down and sank with a full head of steam on her boilers. The tugcaptain did manage to get clear but four crewmen drowned.

When the war came along there was a shortage of tugboats and after some searching they located the *Sea Prince* in her resting place and she was raised and placed on drydock and it wasn't long before she was running again.

In 1927 she was transferred to San Pedro Bay. One night she was sent to assist the S.S. *Los Angeles* from sea to the Union Oil Dock. While going under the bow to pick up the ship's headline there was some mistake in the bells to the engineroom and the tug went foul of the ship and was again sent to the bottom. This time it was in the San Pedro Outer Harbor. The crew except the deckhand was picked up by a Navy launch and taken aboard a battleship.

Where was Oscar, the deckhand? Well, the ship continued on to the oil dock and while docking they could hear cries coming from under the stern of the ship. When coming closer, one of the dockmen told the second mate that a man was perched on top of the rudder and hanging on for dear life. The ship was light and the propeller was giving him a bath each time that it turned over. Oscar was rescued and he told us later that he couldn't swim but somehow had grabbed on to the rudder as the ship went by and managed to hang on.

Captain Holland, who is now a Los Angeles Harbor Pilot, was captain of the *Sea Prince* at the time and he told us that as the tug rolled over, he was sucked into the smokestack as that compartment filled with water.

PWB editors found this photo of a tug named "Sea Prince" in Joe Williamson's famous Seattle collection. Is this the same tug in one of her nine lives?

The *Prince* was again salvaged and in a month or two was back in service. Next she was dispatched to assist the S.S. *Alden Anderson* from the Associated Oil Dock to sea. The ship was still loading oil and the *Prince* made fast alongside. There was an oil spill and a stream of oil poured down the smokestack of the tug. She was soon afire from stem to stern. The crew jumped overboard but the tug's engineer lost his life in the flaming oil. The *Prince* lost her deckhouse and her main deck was charred but she was rebuilt and in due time was back in the running again.

This time she was sent to tow a large steel oil barge in the West Basin. While towing at full throttle she ran aground and the oil barge pulled her so high and dry on a spit, that we were unable to get her off on a high spring tide. It was with the help of two derrickbarges that we managed to get her back into deep water.

As time went on we removed the steam engine from the *Sea Prince* and replaced it with a new diesel. She then had her name changed to the *Crowley No.* 29. Now she was starting out with a clean slate but while assisting a ship from a dock in the Outer Harbor she got into more trouble. The tug got in irons and almost capsized and unfortunately one of the deckhands lost his life.

This old tugboat has had her share of trouble during her long career and she is still a lively old girl but we can't help but keep our fingers crossed when we dispatch her on a job.

I remember when

Continuing the series, with Number Eight

The Workboat Captain That Needed His Rest

BACK in the early days on the San Francisco waterfront the gasoline workboats were operated by one man and their hours of labor were long. There also was a fleet of sailing scows on the bay that carried a crew of two and three men. These scow men loaded and discharged these vessels and sailed them to all points of the bay and rivers. This little yarn was told me by one of these scow captains.

He said that one time he had a heaping deck load of coal on his vessel and was being towed from a dock at the San Francisco Waterfront to Mare Island Navy Yard by a launch, as we called the workboats in those days. He said that they departed from San Francisco at an early hour and the tug stretched out on a headline at about 200 feet ahead of the scow.

He said that he could see the launch operator getting himself comfortable, sitting on a stool with his back to the bulkhead and steering the boat with his feet. Time passed and they entered the spacious San Pablo Bay. The steady rhythm of the engine and the early morning must have had some effect on the operator, but he was soon fast asleep. All went well for a short time, then the launch started going around in large circles and this was soon noticed by the crew of the scow. He said that they sung out to the operator but to no effect. Round and round they went. The operator could not hear them calling because of the noise of his engine.

He told me that the three men on the scow started throwing coal at the launch and although some of it landed on the deck, the operator still snoozed on. When they were just about to give up a piece of coal broke one of the windows in the pilothouse, he said, and the operator jumped to his feet. It didn't take him long to get his bearings and he was soon back on his course again.

Some of the old timers will agree that it was hard for a fellow to keep awake in those old gas boats when plugging along hour after hour with only the tug's engine for a companion.

If you have anecdotes like those of Capt. McGillivray's, we would like to see them. Send yours to Pacific Work Boat, 71 Columbia St., Seattle, Washington.

—The Editors

I remember when

Recollection number NINE.

THE Diesel Tug *Crowley No.* 24 which now operates for the San Pedro Tugboat Company, was not always the *Crowley No.* 24. In 1923 she was the Steamtug *Sea Lark*, a 75-foot vessel built of wood at San Francisco in the year 1900. A few days ago I was talking to a Captain Vincent Dirocco, who is a pilot at Los Angeles Harbor, and in the course of our conversation he asked me if I remembered the time that the old *Sea Lark* almost spelled *Finish* for him. I told him I did, very well.

Vince, as we always called Captain Dirocco, was skipper of the *Sea Lark* back in 1923 when this accident happened. He was sent to assist an oil tanker in the San Pedro West Basin and although he had a new engineer at the throttle he managed to get the ship docked and turned his tug around and was heading for home. Vince blew his whistle for the West Basin Bridge but as a train was crossing, it did not open. He gave a bell to stop and two to back up and his tug lay still in the water waiting for the bridge. After a little while his boat got out of position and he gave a few bells to get her lined up.

There was confusion in the engine room. The engine was steambound. The engineer opened the throttle wide and switched the reverse lever back and forth but the old compound engine just stood there and looked at him. There was a bypass on the engine which he hadn't tried yet. He gave her the bypass and the tug leaped ahead. The bridge wasn't up and although Vince rang a stop bell the tug still plunged ahead. There was no time to think so Vince made a swan dive into the bay and the deckhand did the same.

The *Sea Lark* went right on through and off went the pilothouse and off went the smokestack. The engineer finally stopped the engine and he and the fireman came on deck to take inventory. They were both covered with soot from the falling stack and they sure didn't look like the same men that started out from the dock. Vince and the deckhand were swimming for the tug and the pilothouse was drifting in the harbor. The steam was blowing from the broken whistle pipe but it appeared that no one was injured.

Vince and I had a good laugh about it but he did say that it wasn't so funny at the time.

I remember when

Number TEN in the series of recollections on towboating by Capt. Wm. McGillivray—here is a series of little vignettes. We thing you'll agree that every one of them is a gem in itself.

—The Editors

ONE morning at about 3 o'clock, after coming home light from a job, Louie blew the tug's whistle upon approaching the Red Stack Dock. Phil got out of his bunk, half asleep, went out on the cold porch and asked Louie what he wanted. Louie told him that he just wanted to remind him that he had 3 more hours to sleep. Phil retaliated with some pretty bad language.

* * *

We had an old pile butt down on the dock which was about one by five feet. When we would see one of those old waterfront characters coming along who was about three sheets in the wind, we would stand this pile up so as it would look like a mooring pile. The fellow would lean up against it to take a blow and over would

. . ."Some of the tricks at The Tugboat Dock No. 2'

tumble he and the pile. We always got a good laugh out of it.

* * *

There was a ship at our dock one time that had a Chinese crew aboard. One Sunday, the Chinks having nothing to do, decided that they could drop fishlines through the openings in the old wooden bulkhead and catch fish near the rocks below. They fished for a long time but got no bites. A couple of us fellows couldn't resist getting in the skiff; then going under the wharf and jerking the fishlines. The Chinks got pretty excited and thought they had hit the jackpot, but they got wise when one of them peered under the wharf.

* * *

There used to be an old timer around the waterfront that took lines from sailing ships that were being docked by tugs. His name was Pete and when tugboat men ran across old Pete they would give him pennies they had in their pockets. He was down in front of the office one day and we started throwing pennies down to him, one at a time. He picked about 30 and when his back to give out. Well when he qu dock was full of coppers and he only look at them with longing He figured that his back would let him get rich picking up easy r so we had to go down and hel pick up the balance of his fortu

* * *

There was a ship lying at our one time and one of her hea crossed over our tug to the bul beyond. One of the deckhands, ing rather athletic, swung out the water on the bight of the lin landed back on the tug again. It ed pretty good and we all thoug would try it. When it came my someone let go the line from th and I hit the water with a bang. all got a lot of enjoyment out and I spent the rest of the day d my clothes over the tug's boiler.

* * *

I remember a tugboat captain rang plenty of bells to his eng and rang them fast. One time aft docked his tug, he noticed tha engineer was still working the th back and forth. He said "Joe are you doing there?" Joe said " just catching up to that basket of that you sent down to me."

P.S. Can you send us anecdo your own to top some of these shall be glad to publish them even sit and read them for ours

—The Ed

How the Port of Portland overhauled its big wooden drydock

DOCK workers at the Port of Portland's Swan Island ship repair base prowled through the dank chambers of the Port's 12,000-ton capacity wooden dry dock last month for the first time in more than 20 years and reported that the 37-year-old facility is in remarkably good condition.

Port dockmaster H. L. Feiock said each of the dock's five pontoons was thoroughly inspected from within and that no major repairs were required. Internal bulkheads were recaulked and some timber was replaced.

Only major alteration was the removal of more than 100 tons of rock ballast. Feiock explained that it was required originally to make the wooden structure submerge to proper level, but that the dock has become less buoyant through the years as timbers have waterlogged.

Recaulking of the bulkheads inside each of the watertight pontoons was made difficult by high temperature and humidity. Feiock said a blower was rigged to relieve the men working underneath the deck of the 518-foot-long facility.

The interior was also caked with the mud of more than 20 Willamette river spring freshets, he reported. The last time it received a complete inspection was in 1935.

Only a few minor leaks were discovered in the pontoons and these were quickly patched, the dockmaster reported. The dock showed the results of good care and operation in fresh water, he said.

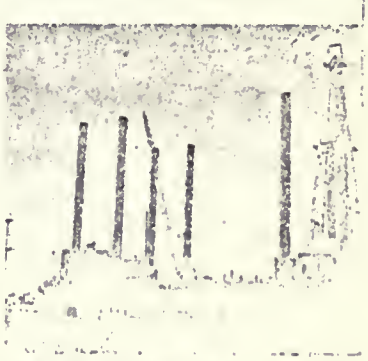
The Port anticipated spending approximately $35,000 for the renewal work, he added, but now estimates the entire job will cost only about $10,000.

The 12,000-capacity facility, called No. 2 dock by the Port, was built in 1920, and Port officials guess it probably has dry-docked in the neighborhood of 2,000 vessels.

It is the Port's second dock in point of service. Old No. 1, built in 1904, was retired last year after 52 years of operation.

The Port also has a 17,000-ton steel dry dock, the YFD 69, which it leases from the Navy. This facility was fully maintained in 1955 and, at the time, was the first of its class to be self dry-docked.

Navy and shipyard officials from all over the United States came to Portland to watch the Port's crew do the job. One at a time, the dock's three sections were detached and lifted out of the water on the other two.



"Pacific Driller No. 1," owne Offshore Constructors, Inc., an til recently leased by Standar Company of California and the l ble Oil and Refining Co., has pleted test coring near Santa bara. After drilling 8,000 feet the ocean's floor, this giant pla now stands alongside a pier in Beach, once again available for ing but with no takers until s ment of California's land off and oil royalty controversy.

I remember when

When you read about Louie and Phil in this column last month you may have wondered just who they were. We neglected to include the first part of Capt. McGillivray's article Number TEN last month, so we'll give it to you now, and you'll learn more about Louie. —The Editors

SOMETIMES when things get dull down on the tugboat dock we would pull off a few tricks on one another to liven things up a bit. We had a big skipper there by the name of Louie Langdon. I remember one time when we were loading stores aboard a tugboat, a sack of onions broke open and Louie began playing catchers with them, tossing them back and forth to the men. During the play Louie jumped down on the tug, unnoticed, and wrapped an egg in onion skins and got back in the game. Louie said to one of the fellows "catch this one" and he let it go. This fellow caught, what he thought was an onion, and you should have seen his surprised look when the egg broke in his face.

Louie was captain on the Tug *Reliance* and he had an engineer named Sim Thompson. The *Reliance* had a ventilator right over the engineer's seat in the engineroom. Louie had brought an artificial spider which he attached to the end of a string. He came into the dock one day and rang off the engine and as he passed the engineroom he noticed that the engineer was still sitting at the throttle half dreaming. He got the spider and lowered it down the ventilator and it touched Sim on the hand. Sim opened his eyes and saw the spider and slipped off the seat and landed down in the lower engineroom. He was a wreck for the rest of the day.

One night Louie was sleeping aboard the old *Sea King* as the crew had early orders for the morning. Louie had played tricks on the cook in the past and the cook wanted to get back at him. The next morning, at about 5 a.m., the cook started the wood and coal fire in the galley stove. When the smoke in the stove was pretty dense he sucked a big garb of it out with his bellows and pumped it up the speaking tube from the engineroom to the pilothouse and repeated this a couple of times, after locking Louie in, of course. After a little while Louie came climbing out of the pilothouse window, in his nightshirt, yelling "Fire."

There were times when some of the tugboat skippers would be sitting around the front office talking and Louie would come in and sit along side of one of them. He would drop an egg in the fellow's pocket and when he was leaving, he would slap the guy on the hip and say, "Well, I guess I will go down to the boat and shave up." The fellow would put his hand in his pocket and find the scrambled egg. Louie was 6 feet 4 inches and weighed 230 lbs. so what could a fellow do about it?

Old Phil was the nightman at the Red Stacks for about 20 years and he slept in the office always with his bed in the same position, so when he awakened while half asleep, he would put his hand out to the left and there was the phone, and to the right, and there was the light switch, and the door was straight ahead. One night when Phil was sleeping soundly, Louie and a deckhand sneaked in and turned Phil's bed around. The deckhand then went down to the bulkhead and called the office on the phone. Louie watched through the window. Phil half asleep, reached to the left but no phone; he reached to the right and no light switch. He got up and started for the door, which should have been straight ahead, and he bumped into the wall. It was a bad night for Phil and things worked out for Louie as he figured they would. I may add that Phil's eyesight was bad which made it worse for him, however he was sure a good sport.

Oldest work boat? "May" may be

IS this the oldest work boat still in service on the Pacific Coast? San Franciscans think it might well be—she is the "May," constructed by the Union Iron Works (now Bethlehem Pacific Coast Steel Corp.), San Francisco in 1882. She was originally an open launch with hull of wrought iron, powered by a 2-cycle, compound steam engine and was used, mostly, for travel up the rivers.

The "May" is presently in service as a light tug in the service of the Seaborn Towing Service, Alameda, California, shifting barges and towing for construction jobs. Seaborn put a deck and pilot house on her many years ago and installed a 4-cylinder, 40-hp Caterpillar engine. She is 30 by 8 feet with a 4½-foot draw.

Three-Purpose Barge

(Continued from page 15)

attract attention in the waterfront construction fraternity, where Bill Gilbert is well known. His father, Charles Gilbert, was long in the towboat business—had one of the first Lake Washington freight-passenger boats, the *Vasten*, which operated out of Leschi Park and ran around Mercer Island before floating-bridge days.

Bill Gilbert was a small boy in those days and his experience aboard his father's workboats helped him start his first pileuriving venture in the late '30's. He sold out to Walter McCray in 1951, and in the years since has put a lot of thought into his new equipment, as this description should help to demonstrte. His new operation could take him to all parts of the Pacific Northwest, salt-and fresh-water alike.

December 1957

I remember when

There's no holding him back now. Captain McGillivray has sent us two more yarns in his "I remember when" series. One good story always leads to another. We're sure you are enjoying these as much as we are.

—THE EDITORS

Number ELEVEN:

Liquor Shortage, or The Curse of Drink

SOME of the boys will remember the Steamtug *Fearless* that operated in San Francisco Bay for a number of years. It was said that she was built for Spreckles and stationed at Honolulu back in the days when King Liliuokalani ruled. A Captain Billie Olsen told me this yarn many years ago. He was her first captain.

He said that it was the custom for the royal family to make use of the *Fearless* as a sort of a yacht and make trips around the harbor and often have parties aboard. There was a certain amount of liquor brought aboard and at the end of the day the crew would gather up the half empty bottles and put on a party of their own. It seems that the time came when the royal parties became fewer and the tug crew suffered from lack of nourishment.

The mate had an idea. They would cut off a short piece of their towing hawser and sell it up town for a jug of liquor. The captain and all the crew agreed and it worked out so good that they repeated the procedure a few more times.

Some time later a large foreign training ship came to Honolulu and the King, Queen and their party went out to meet her. The *Fearless* was all dressed up with her flags, and the crew wore their whites. They spoke the ship and then decided to tow her into port. Captain Olsen told me that he gave orders to his crew to put the hawser aboard the ship. The towline was down in the lazaret aft and a running line was made fast to the wire and the boys were ordered to stand clear while the tug moved ahead to pay the hawser out of the hold. 125 feet of wire came out, then a few feet of ten inch hawser and that was it. It was an embarrassing situation, but they finally had the ship give them a line and everything ended up all right. They had no idea that they sold so much of the tug's hawser, but they did know that they made a number of trips to the grog shop.

January 1958

I remember when

Here are two more sketches in Capt. William McGillivray's series of old-time towboat experiences on San Francisco Bay. These make installment number THIRTEEN.

A Bargain Is a Bargain

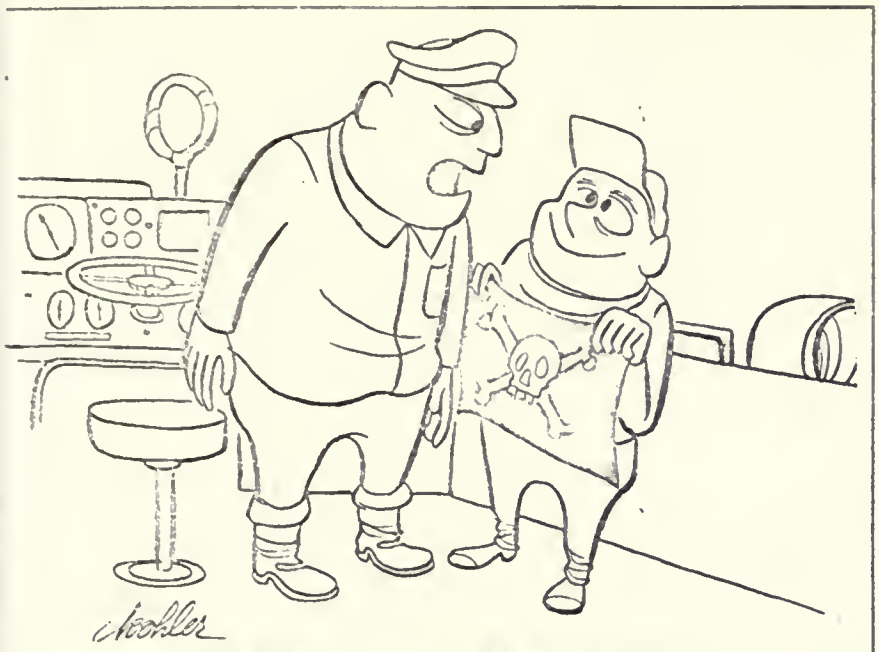
IN the old sailing ship days tugboat captains had to bargain with the shipmasters on prices to tow their vessels into port. Many of these sailing ships came into San Francisco.

Tom Crowley told me once of a ship that was becalmed in a position about one mile west of the Seal Rocks near the entrance of San Francisco Bay.

A tugboat arrived on the scene and the dickering started. The shipmaster insisted that the tugcaptain's price was much too high. He told the tugboat man that he was anchored and could remain there until a breeze came up, when he would heave anchor and sail into port. The tugboat skipper did see the anchor chain leading out through the hawsepipe and he believed the story. He thought the matter over and decided to cut his price in half.

The shipmaster accepted and the tug's hawser was hauled aboard. The ship gave the tug the signal to take her away and the tug started ahead: but what about the anchor? One turn of the ship's windlass and all was clear. The ship had just a couple fathoms of her anchor chain overboard but no anchor.

When the tugcaptain saw them whip in the piece of chain he knew that he was licked, but after all, a bargain is a bargain, so what's the use.



"You've got an awfully twisted sense of humor."

Pacific Steamboats" another ook by Williamson and Newell

River currents and tidewater bays yesteryear are churned into fasci- ting interest as the 500 illustrations old ships parade across the pages a new book—*Pacific Steamboats*— maritime men Gordon Newell and e Williamson.

As in their 1957 book now on sale, *cific Tugboats*, the authors have rched the mythical chests of many old hull to make this memorable atribution to the lore of the sea. *Pacific Steamboats*, goes further, h greater number and variety of otographs and with detailed stories ich trace the beginnings of inland igation on West Coast waterways, h as San Francisco Bay, the Sac- ento and Columbia Rivers, Puget nd and British Columbia bays. ture and text take the reader back ide-wheeler and stern-wheeler days, ging him up to modern diesel fer- . The book is at once a compre- sive catalog and a valuable chron- of steamboating progress on the fic Coast.

aperior Publishing Company, Box), Seattle 11, will issue the book eptember.

iams & Lane, Inc., new GM hern California distributor

lliams & Lane, Inc., 1077 East- Hwy., Berkeley, California, has appointed Industrial, Petroleum Marine Distributor for Northern rnia by Detroit Diesel Engine General Motors Corp. The firm to local trade circles but its principals, James R. Williams and Nick L. Lane, have been active in diesel engine industry for many years.

Williams, a former member of General Motors staff, heads the new firm as president; Lane, formerly sales mgr. of Atlas Imperial Diesel Engine Co., is elected vice pres. and gen. mgr.

Other GM products handled by Williams & Lane, Inc., are Allison transmissions and torque converters, Electro-Motive industrial diesels, and generating sets. In addition to distribution of GM products, the new firm will manufacture electrical generating sets, control panels and switchboards engineered to fit the job.

Other staff members are W. M. Glade, sec.-treas.; R. L. Smith, chief engineer; Jack Jones, service and production mgr.; and Harry Flosi, parts mgr. Williams & Lane, Inc., will retain same building and facilities formerly occupied by West Coast Motors.

General Motors expands plant producing Detroit diesel engines

Construction has started on a 289,000 square foot addition to the General Motors Detroit Diesel Engine Division plant, Detroit, Michigan. Clyde W. Truxell, general manager, said completion is expected next May. The new building will house all final assembly, testing, and shipping facilities for Detroit Diesel.

This is the ninth plant expansion program since Detroit Diesel's founding in 1937. The new addition will increase total floor space to approximately 1,520,000 square feet. There are now six main buildings and a laboratory on the Division's 120-acre site.

I remember when

Two Much Is More Than Enough

SOME years ago a French oil tanker was anchored in San Francisco Bay and I was ordered to proceed, with my tug, to the vessel to take her up river. It was noon and as lunch was ready aboard the tug I sat down and put away a hearty meal in preparation to my long trip up river. I then put out to the ship and as I came aboard I met the captain at the top of the gangway. He spoke little English but I did understand him to say that the engines weren't quite ready and as we walked toward his cabin he said very plainly "would you care for something?" I figured that he was inviting me to have a French cordial or a glass of rare French wine which was okay with me to top off the big meal that I had aboard the tug a half hour before.

Well, the captain led me into the cabin and said something to the waiter and in ten minutes I had a seven course dinner in front of me. A bottle of wine was included. The waiter could speak no English at all and the more I tried to stop him, the more he brought. In order not to insult the captain I stuffed some of the food down my throat, and with the aid of a little wine to help it down, I got by, but I sure felt miserable on my trip up river.

I asked for it, I guess, and they did their best to please, but never again; I learned my lesson.

Cummins Engine Co. purchases Atlas Crankshaft, Inc.

Purchase by Cummins Engine Company, Inc., Columbus, Indiana, of Atlas Crankshaft, Inc., Fostoria, Ohio, was announced jointly by R. E. Huthsteiner, President of Cummins, and Edward A. Harper, President of Atlas.

Cal-Marine goes to new quarters

Cal-Marine Radiophone Co. is now in its new home at 1018 Columbus Ave., San Francisco. The phone number remains the same — ORdway 3-2552.

The new location gives the marine electronics firm much more room. There is ample storage space, shop space, office, and an attractive show room.

The firm was founded six years ago by Bob Flowerman and Bob Gifford. The company sells Apelco and Raytheon marine electronic devices, and offers complete installation and service facilities.

NEW BOOK

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TODAY there's a *new kind* of outboard power for work boat duty! A complete line of new Evinrude *Aquasonic* models so advanced in capability, stamina, and smooth, quiet operation that they set entirely new standards of performance. Get the facts! Send coupon for booklet.

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I remember when . . .

Continuing the delightful series of anecdotes from earlier tugboating days on San Francisco Bay. These are written bp Capt. William McGillivray, now of San Pedro Tug Boat Co., and he hopes—and we hope—that they will spark a few memories of your own. If you care to set them to writing, send them along to "Pacific Work Boat"—and we'll be glad to publish them if you like.—The Editors

Number FIFTEEN:

"Newcomers"

IN the towboat and workboat business I expect operators and skippers could tell some interesting stories about the layman who comes to town on a load of hay and decides that he wants to be a towboat man. During the war we were glad to get them. I hired a good looking young fellow one time and told him to report aboard a certain tug on the following morning.

He showed up all right but I noticed that he had a fishing pole over his shoulder. I asked him what that was for and he told me that as long as he was aboard a boat, he might just as well do some fishing. We had an understanding and that fellow is still with us after 15 years and he turned out to be a good man.

GOING back some years I remember a fellow that I picked up on the dock when I was operating a workboat in San Francisco. I took him along as a deckhand, one night, and we towed an empty barge from San Francisco to Oleum. It turned out to be a dark night and he had the wheel going through San Pablo Bay.

He kept complaining that it was dark and he couldn't see where he was going. I relieved him of the wheel and he went out on deck but soon returned and said. "No wonder I couldn't see anything, the headlight is out." When we arrived at Oleum I made fast alongside the barge and headed for the dock. I told my man to go up the fore end of the barge and put a line ashore.

The tide was ebbing and I figured on hooking a line on the corner of the barge and hanging her off until I could get aboard and get the heavy lines ashore. The barge did not fetch up on the line but kept drifting back with the tide. I sung out to inquire if he had put the line ashore. He assured me that he had. I jumped aboard the barge to see what was wrong. He had put the line ashore alright. He just tossed the whole line on the dock and that was it. After all I didn't tell him to hold on to one end of it, so what?

WE hired a despatcher one time, who had been a cattle herder from Idaho. One night when a tug returned to the dock from a job, the tug captain asked him if that was all for the night. The despatcher said "Yes, take your boat down the dock and hitch it to a post and go ahead home."

We also took on a railroad fireman one time. He went firing one of the steamtugs. After a few days I asked him how he liked the job. He said "Okay, but there are no windows down in that fireroom and a fellow can't see where he is going." After a time this fellow obtained his engineer's license and became one of our best engineers.

I delivered a small tug down to San Pedro one time and I had a deckhand with me that had spent much of his time up on the Sacramento River where tules grow in abundance. When we arrived near the entrance to San Pedro Harbor a fog closed in on us. I put this fellow on the bow as a lookout and told him to report anything that he saw. We were pretty close in shore and some

OVER

kelp beds came in sight which was a sign that we were getting in too close. Louie spotted the kelp floating on top of the water and sung out"tules ahead".
I thought that this yarn was a good one and it is true. There was a fellow who operated a 40 foot launch on the San Francisco Waterfront by the name of "Butch" Wagner. Butch had met a girl at a dance and he invited her to come down and take a ride on his boat. He drove her down to the landing for the trip. His launch was lying at the bulkhead and a large Army Transport was lying at the pier near by. The girl looked at both vessels and then asked Butch if he intended to take the big one or the small one . Butch replied that he thought that it would be best to take the small one but he promised her that he would take the big vessel next time.

I happened to be coming across the bay on a ferryboat one time and a lady. tapped me on the shoulder and said" what are in those sacks in the racks overhead?" I told her that they were lifepreservers and she told me that it was the first time that she had ever been on a boat. She was from the middlewest and on her was to Los Angeles.

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portant and where engine performance is critical.

Now in some cases towboat operators are considering the application of turbochargers to engines already in service. One example where this has

one of its AiResearch model T3011 turbochargers on the ship, boosting the rpm of the engine from 280-285 up to 313 rpm. Now the trip is reduced to 10 to 12 hours. That makes a corresponding reduction in round-trip time for the tug; operating on a daily

that this proved a further savings since loading crews in Redondo and Catalina could be scheduled more efficiently." The report indicates a still further advantage in decreased specific fuel consumption by the engine.

No change in propeller was necessary with the increased speed.

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remember when . . .

Here is another chapter from the series of yarns by Capt. William McGillivray, now at San Pedro Tug Boat Co. May we repeat our oft-expressed wish that YOU will send us a yarn to top this one? The good captain wouldn't want his story-telling title to go un-challenged.—The Editors

Number SIXTEEN: Thou Shalt Not Steal

SOME years ago when we were running the morning papers from San Francisco to Oakland, I had rather amusing experience. I was running a heavy duty launch called the *Guide* on this particular morning, and I had just discharged about 350 bundles of papers at the foot of 7th Street, Oakland, and was preparing to start back to San Francisco. It was about 3 am and everything was very quiet. I noticed a river steamer lying at the adjoining dock with the eye of a new line sticking out of her starboard chock. The thought came to me that it would make a good towline for the old *Guide*. There were no lights on the vessel and I figured that the crew had turned in for the night.

I started backing out of the slip and as I slipped by the steamer, I placed the eye of the line over my head bitt. I continued backing and the line reeled out with no end in sight. All of a sudden the main deck came alive with Greek deckhands, shaking their fists at me and yelling. I dropped the line overboard and beat it down the channel and no doubt my face was pretty red.

On the way across the bay I had time to think it over. In those days the riverboat deckhands put in long hours and when their vessels made fast to a dock for a few hours, they looked for a place to lie down and get a little shuteye, expecting to be called again at any time. Sometimes they would just throw a blanket over a line coiled under the shelter deck and get what rest they could.

I can imagine their surprise when they awakened out of a sound sleep to find their bed running out from under them. If there were any legs broken, I may have heard more about it, but as it was, it all ended there. I was beginning to learn that crime doesn't pay.

tions need only be disconnected, the hose assembly swung aside and the unit removed. With rigid pipe connections, considerable down time would result from cutting pipe (and often removing the pipe from the confined area) before removing the strainer. After replacing the unit, time would again be spent in welding up the rigid pipe connections. Since a work boat does not earn anything for an operator while moored at a repair dock, this expense can reach fantastic proportions.

Foss engineers and crews also see many additional advantages with Aeroquip in maintenance and operational matters:

(1) Since this hose does not support marine growth, and corrosion is non-existent, their salt water cooling system is due for years of trouble-free service.

(2) Knowing that vibration can work-harden metal, resulting in leaks and eventual failure of fittings in rigid pipe installations, they have licked this problem.

(3) Pressure drop and line loss problems are minimized with an Aeroquip installation; a rigid pipe system encounters this in its numerous ells and fittings.

So, with the *Carol Foss* and *Shannon Foss* now actively joining the work fleet, Foss Launch & Tug Company's slogan "Always Ready" will be brought to new meaning with this step ahead in marine engineering.

September 1958

I remember when

Here is what we consider to be the finest of all in the series of yarns by Capt. McGillivray, even though it has a sad ending. It is Number SEVENTEEN:

The One-Man Steamtug Crew

WE had a young deckhand at the Red Stacks in San Francisco who was a versatile sort of a fellow. He could cook, fire a boiler, run an engine or handle a tugboat.

One night the tugboat dispatcher received a call from a steamship company advising him that one of his tugs was tied up in a berth that was needed for an incoming ship. He requested that the tug be removed. There were no crews on the dock at the time except Jack Doyle, who happened to be in the office. Jack heard the conversation and told the dispatcher that he would take care of the boat. He proceeded down the dock and the dispatcher figured that he was going to round up some men.

The tugboat was lying two piers away from the Red Stack dock and Jack went over and climbed aboard. He, alone, started the pumps; put fires under the boilers and warmed up the engine. He turned on the running lights and went on deck and let go the lines. He placed the engine in the slow-astern-motion and beat it back in the pilothouse to steer the tug out of the slip. He sounded the backing-out-signal and soon the tugboat was out in the bay.

He went below again and put the engine in the go-ahead-motion and returned to the wheel. As he neared the Red Stack dock he shut her off and drifted into the slip. When he got close to the berth he ran down and backed her up. He managed to get his lines up on the dock and the job was finished.

The dispatcher came down to the boat to see who all was aboard. He was amazed to find that Jack did the job without any help. They didn't say anything to the boss in the morning as they didn't know just how the boss would take it. The tug was an eighty-footer.

A year or so later Jack Doyle went to sea on a tug called the *Sea Eagle*. They were engaged in towing a four masted schooner up the Coast when the tug was lost. The crew of the schooner told us later that they had run into a storm and that the towing engine pulled out of the deck of the tug, leaving a large hole, which immediately filled up with water and the tug sank in deep water.

There were fourteen men on that tug, including Jack Doyle, and nothing more was ever heard of them. I believe that Jack would have made an excellent towboat captain had he been able to carry on.

B&W powers Canadian ferry

The first ferry in Canada to be equipped with B&W Alpha diesel engines has been put in service about 150 miles east of Quebec, named *Saguenay* for the river whose estuary it crosses. Two 4-cylinder engines type 400-VO arranged in continuation of each other, each developing 235 bhp at 365 rpm, according to the announcement from Burmeister & Wain Corp.

A B&W controllable-pitch propeller is located at either end; the ship does not turn around in its shuttle service. To add maneuverability and protect the propellers during ice conditions, each propeller is housed in a Kort nozzle which acts as rudder at the same time. Service speed is 10 knots.

I remember when

Story No. EIGHTEEN of the series
by Capt Wm. McGillivray

It was the Brains on the Bridge

SOME years ago I was decking on the old Steamtug *Pilot*. George Pavisich was skipper and George was one of the best in San Francisco Bay at the time. On this particular day we were sent out to assist a heavily laden British steamer from anchorage to the South side of Pier 25. The tide was running strong ebb. We made fast on the port quarter and George went aboard to pilot the vessel to the dock.

Soon after, the engineer called me on the speaking tube and informed me that he was having trouble and would not be able to use the engine for about a half hour. I went aboard the ship and notified George without letting the ship's captain know. George instructed me to go back to the tug and answer his whistle signals and to ring bells to the engineers as if nothing had happened. I did as he directed and the ship proceeded toward the dock towing the tug along with her. We were in hopes that the tug's engine would be ready by the time it would be needed.

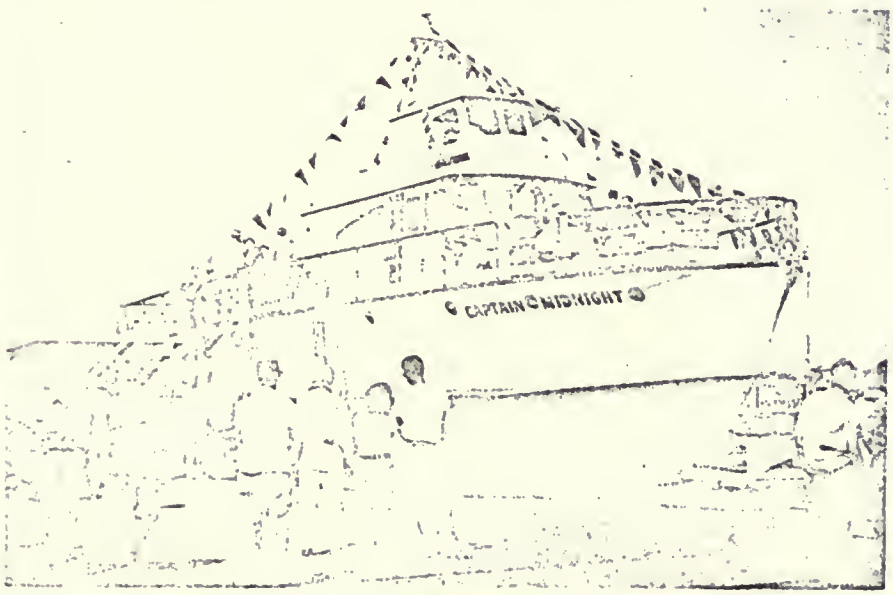
Upon arriving at the dock George nosed the vessel up on the end of the pier with her head into the strong ebb tide. He had the linesmen run a headline well up the dock and started heaving while making good use of the ship's engines to help bend the vessel around the corner of the dock and into her berth.

The old *Pilot* lay dead on the quarter while the tide raced around her hull, which made it difficult for the skipper on the bridge to know just how much work she was doing. George kept blowing his mouth whistle; I kept on ringing the bells and the engineer paid no attention but continued to work on his engine.

In the end the ship was docked and all was well. George left the bridge and came down aboard t. tug. The engine was almost ready a in a few minutes we were backi out of the slip and on our way hom

On the way up the bay George to me the part of the story that I did: know. He told me that when he we aboard the ship, the captain co plained that the tug was too sm. and he requested that another larg one be dispatched before starting i George assured the captain that t. *Pilot* was a good boat and there w nothing to worry about. The capta accepted, under protest, and Geor went ahead with the job. George sa that after the job was finished t captain shook his hand and comp mented him on the fine job he d He also told George that he was so that he misjudged the tug as he w sure that the tug was every bit good as George said it was.

George looked down at me with twinkle in his eye and said "Reme ber, Mac, it is always the brains the bridge and not the power in tug"—I have never forgotten that a I think that most of the towboat m of today will agree that there is sor thing to it.



Boyce launches "Captain Midnight"

NOW in service in San Diego is the *Captain Midnight*, sportfishing boat converted from a Navy AVR boat by Boyce Boat & Yacht Co. of San Diego. Picture shows her just before she was re-launched.

She is 64 feet long, 15 feet beam, and has a full 6 feet of headroom below decks. She sleeps 41, and is equipped with radio, automatic direction finder, radar, and Olympic diesel galley. Her power plant consists of two General Motors Detroit diesels, Series 6-71's.

In remodeling, Boyce stripped the inside, installed watertight bulkheads, new Douglas Fir and mahogany deckhouse, new rails, new main salon and galley. The deck line forward was raised. She travels at about 12 knots, taking charter parties or regular trips into Mexican fishing grounds below the border.

Owners of the *Captain Midnight* are L. D. Gooch of Hugoton, Kansas, and Wayne Miller of San Diego. Miller is also skipper of the boat.

Boyce is planning soon to build two 53-foot sportfishers, with flush decks, sleeping 38 each.

1959 tide tables published

The 1959 Tidal Current Tables the Pacific Coast of North Amer and Asia which are published by Coast and Geodetic Survey, U. S. I partment of Commerce, have been leased for public distribution.

Among tables in the 238-page v ume is one giving predicted times slack water and the predicted times velocities of strength of current each day of the year at 30 refere stations on the Pacific Coast of N America and Asia. This informa can also be obtained for more t 2,100 other places through the us a table of current differences and o constants which is also included.

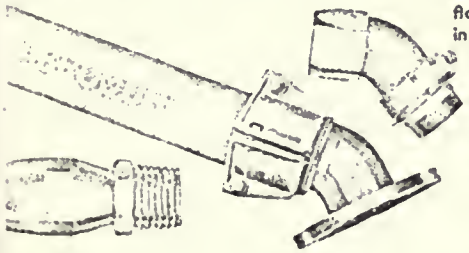
Use Aeroquip Flexible Piping For All Marine Applications

FUEL LINES. These diesel fuel lines on the main engine of a new tug are made with Aeroquip Flexible Piping to withstand vibration, assure long, trouble-free service. Aeroquip Piping for engine fuel, water and hot lube oil applications is available in sizes for ½" to 3" O.D. tubing.

HYDRAULIC LINES to tug steering rams were made from Aeroquip ¾" 1509 Rubber-Covered High Pressure Hose. Aeroquip also offers a full range of special type marine hose for refrigerants, drinking water and non-magnetic applications.

LUBE OIL LINES made with Aeroquip Flexible Piping and Segmented Elbow Fittings absorb engine vibration on this large tug application. Fittings are standard Aeroquip elbows with flange ends.

WATER LINES. Using Aeroquip Flexible Piping, large diameter fresh water and salt water lines can be assembled and installed easily, without costly forming and fitting. This Aeroquip 4" salt water cooling line uses an Aeroquip Segmented Fitting with standard flange end. Piping for hull lines is available in sizes for 2½" to 6" pipe diameters.



All Aeroquip Flexible Marine Piping has detachable, reusable fittings for quick, easy assembly and disassembly of any marine line. Aeroquip Fittings are available with standard flange, silbraze split clamp, pipe and swivel nut end fittings. Write for Marine Catalog No. 302.

Aeroquip

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I remember when

Here is the NINETEENTH tale by Capt. Wm. McGillivray . . .

"Smokestack Tom"

. . . and once again we invite you to top this story if you have a better one to tell. Address contributions to The Editors, Pacific Work Boat, 71 Columbia, Seattle 4.

THERE was a time some years ago when the Red Stack Steamtug *Fearless* made a trip to Alaska in command of an oldtimer by the name of Tom (Smokestack) Tonnesen. Tom told me the yarn himself and you can come to your own conclusion as to the authenticity of it. He said that they were approaching the port of Anchorage when suddenly the tug went aground.

They were some distance from the shore and as the tide was dropping the tug began to list. At low water the tug was lying completely on her side. The *Fearless* had a sharp deep hull and here she was without a drop of water around her. They tell me that the tide drops 30 feet at Anchorage. There was Tom and his crew perched on the high side of the deckhouse and wondering what to do. They had no idea of where the water was in the boiler but nothing showed in the guage glass.

A thought came to Tom. Would the tug right herself again when the tide came up? Well, he took no chances. He and his men crawled inside and caulked all the doors on the low side, with rags and closed up the cracks the best they could. After a time the tide started to flood. The water crept up over the rail and up the side of the deckhouse and Tom was right; she didn't straighten up.

The solid water came up the deckhouse and reached the top combing and nothing happened. Some water was leaking through the doors. The water now was coming over the house combing but by this time the tug started up too. Little by little she came back to an upright position until the hull took over again.

The boiler water appeared in the glass again and Tom and the crew breathed a sigh of relief. The steam gauge showed 40 lbs. and they lighted the fires and soon had a full head of steam again.

Some of the Alaska boys would know if this really could have happened but I guess we must take Tom's word for it as Tom has long since gone where all good towboat captains go.

I remember when

Number TWENTY in the series by Capt. McGillivray, these two anecdotes bring to mind the lucky escape for Walter Pirtle on the barge "Port of Longview" when it blew up at Pasco Washington last December . . . —Eds

The Sudden Disappearance of the Nitrate Barge and Its Cargo

SOME years ago I had the Steamtug *Crowley No. 9* in San Francisco Bay. One bright morning I was sent to tow a large carfloat loaded with Niter from alongside the *S.S. Colusa* at Pier 43 to the Hercules Powder Works at Point Pinole in San Pablo Bay.

I put my towline aboard the barge and was soon on my way up river. The trip was uneventful on the way up and upon arriving at the powder works I sounded my whistle to get my orders from the dock man. There was a barge already at the dock and I was ordered to put my tow to anchor.

I headed up into the wind, then backed up to the barge and put a man aboard to drop the anchor. This being done I let go my hawser, took my man back on the tug and hauled away from the barge a few hundred feet and stood off.

Then something happened. I saw some smoke rise from the center of the barge and then in five minutes the whole barge was ablaze from stem to stern. I could feel the heat on the tug 300 feet away. Nothing could be done. The bags of niter went off like firecrackers.

Well, forty-five minutes later the barge and its cargo had disappeared. The anchor capstan and a small portion of the bow were still hanging onto the anchor chain.

There was nothing more for me to do but to return to San Francisco and make a report to the office. On the way home we encountered two San Francisco firetugs racing on their way to the fire. We hailed them and told them that they were a little late but they continued on their way to make sure. We never did know what started the fire but we had the thought that it was a spark from the stack of the old *Crowley No. 9*. Well, that was a long tow all for nothing, and my crew and myself didn't feel too good about the whole thing.

The niter fire puts me in mind of another fire that just about destroyed a 50-foot work boat, back when I was a pretty young fellow. We were filling the gas tanks of our work boat fleet at the bulkhead at Howard Street Wharf in San Francisco. One of our boats was called the *Warrior*, and the *Warrior* had a copper 100-gallon gas tank located under the bow.

We filled the tank from drums on the dock using a hand pump. The tank filled and ran over. I put the cap back on and went in to start the engine to move the boat. The vent in the tank had allowed the gas to run over and spread over the engineroom floorboards.

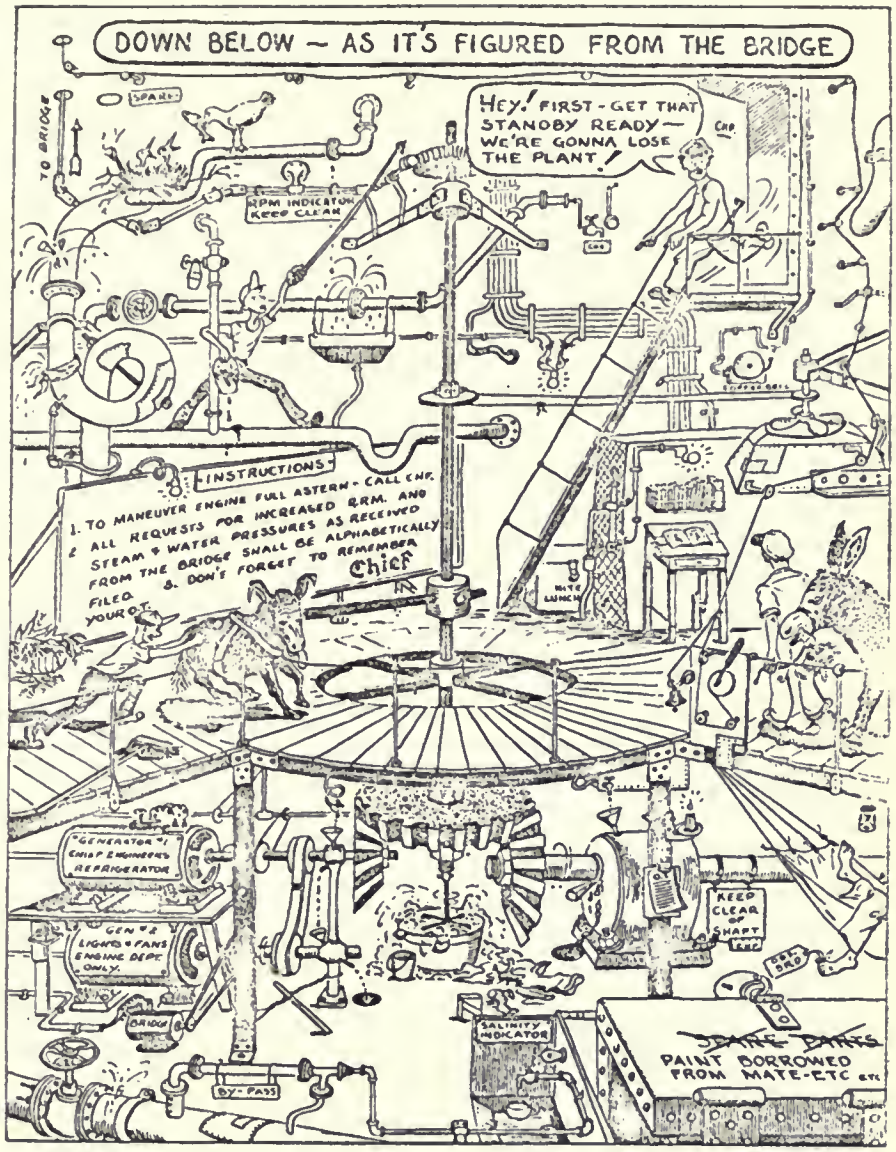
There was nothing wrong about that except that I was carrying a lighted lantern. We had no electric lights in those days. I set the light down on the floor to start the engine and as you can guess; the whole engineroom was aflame in less than two minutes.

I discovered that my clothes were also afire, so I jumped overboard. I swam back to the side of the boat and hung on. The fire was now really hot and I thought that the gas tank would go any minute. I intended to push myself under water if it did.

I waited, but nothing happened, so I climbed back on the boat and started getting up on the dock. Just then the fireboat came in and let go a stream that first hit me and sent me sliding across the dock. It was a tough night. I remained home the next day nursing my burns and splinters and I was told that there wasn't much left of the staunch old *Warrior*.

Some days later the boss called me up and said that he had six more boats for me to burn up and to get back to work. I think that if he would have fired me then, he would have saved himself all the trouble that I have caused him in the 52 years that I have been with the company.

My advice is that if you go into an engineroom of a gas boat with a lantern, be sure that the lantern isn't lighted—especially if the engineroom is not gas-free.



Another ocean-going petroleum barge

BARGE 18, with a capacity of 2,300,000 gallons, was launched at the Pacific Coast Engineering Co., Alameda, Calif., in March.

Built for Tank Barge 18, Inc., Pier 14, San Francisco, at an approximate cost of $½ million, the new barge is 272 feet long, has a 68-foot beam and is 19 feet, 6 inches deep. Designed to be unmanned, the barge is of all-steel welded construction and has 24 cargo compartments. Construction time was approximately 3 months. Cargo pumps are driven by three 210-hp. diesel engines capable of pumping 325,00 gallons per hour, discharging the barge in seven hours.

A full ocean service load line has been assigned by the American Bureau of Shipping and a certificate has been issued by the U. S. Coast Guard to haul Grade "B" or lower petroleum products.

According to its owners, Barge 18 will be used in Pacific Coastwise trade.

I remember when

Necessity is the Mother of Invention

Seems as though there is no limit to the wonderful stories Capt. McGillivray can write for us. . . Shows you what a man can do when he starts putting his memories down on paper. . . Recollections from a career in towboating are like a well that never runs dry—one story will bring another and another to mind, and so it goes. How about you? Does this one remind you of ways you've figured your way out of a predicament? It is NUMBER TWENTY-ONE in the series.

READ the story from Jim Arness in the March issue which was very very interesting. It does show that Necessity is the mother of Invention. . . I had a somewhat similar experience too, many many years ago, which called for a little figuring.

I ran ashore with a 60-foot gas boat in the south end of San Francisco Bay. I was alone and was stuck in a pretty desolate spot. I grounded at high tide and the water went out and left me there. About 12 hours later when the tide was reaching its peak again I proceeded to start my engine but no spark. The old home-made wet batteries were down. In those day we had the old *Make & Break* spark using igniters and magneto. The engine ran on distillate. We primed the engine with gasoline, started it on the batteries using a bar on the flywheel, then throwing the switch on the magneto. The magneto was not timed to the engine but put out a constant flow of juice to the igniters. I took the battery wire off and flicked it on the engine. The spark was faint and not enough to do me any good.

I had to do something or stay there and starve. I thought that if I could get the magneto spinning I would at least have a spark. An idea came to me. I had a fishing line aboard. The magneto operated by a rubber pulley which ran on the inside of the main engine flywheel. A tension was kept on the pulley by a spring which the magneto against the flywheel.

I took the fish cord and wou up on the shaft and hub of the neto pulley. I then primed the er with gas and barred the engine to compress the charge in the h I set the No. 1 cylinder on firing sition and all was ready. I put foot against the magneto and pr it away from the flywheel and pulled the cord in the manner of s ing an outboard motor and at the s time I flipped the igniter with fingers. The engine kicked over as it did, I took my foot off the and the flywheel took the mag over. My engine was now runnin its usual way. I backed off the and my troubles were over.

The next day I told my story to boys at the boathouse and I could that they sort of doubted me. I to do it all over again to conv them, and I may add that it wo the second time.

Maritime Day committee all

Robert D. Bush, Executive As ant of the American Mail Line, and general chairman of the 1959 tional Maritime Day Committee, announced his committee chair for this year's week of activities oring the American Merchant Mar

The week-long celebration, sp sored by the Propeller Club, assi by the Yukon Club and the Chan of Commerce, was to begin May with the coronation of Miss Mariti and to reach its climax May 21, w a permanent historical plaque wil dedicated on Seattle's waterfront on Friday, May 22, when the Ch ber of Commerce will stage its an National Maritime Day Luncheon. tional Maritime Day is celebrated year on May 22, the anniversary the beginning of the first transatla voyage by a steamship.

R. J. Soriano, Seattle Represe tive of the Masters, Mates & Pi Local 6, was named chairman of Miss Maritime Committee.

R. D. Mohn, Manager of the Tr portation Department, Seattle Ch ber of Commerce, and John G. P Auditor of the Blue Star Line, named co-chairmen of the Marit Day luncheon committee.

Paul M. Poliak, of the law firm Evans, McLaren, Lane, Powel Beeks, was named chairman of Historical Plaque Committee.

Charles R. Link, of Horter, Ja & Speck, was placed in charge of time Displays; J. J. Dillon, Tra Manager of the Alaska Line is fin chairman; and W. Ray Melton, Se public relations counsel, was na publicity chairman.

I remember when

Continuing Capt. McGillivray's series of towboat reminiscences, here is number TWENTY-TWO:

Almost Missed the Hole

I guess many towboat men have a good scare thrown into them, at some time or another during their towboat career. I had a few of them myself.

I had the Tug *Sea Witch*, some years ago in San Francisco and one morning I was sent to tow a dismantled sailing ship hull, loaded with sludge, from the gas house, to sea to dump.

I towed her some distance outside the San Francisco Lightship and cruised around there all day and half of the night while the crew of the barge pumped the refuse overboard. In the early hours of the morning I received the signal that the barge was unloaded and there was nothing more to do but to get my tow back home. A fog had shut in but as I had located the Lightship I picked my course for the Golden Gate. After an hour or more I picked up the Mile Rock Light signal on my starboard bow and Point Bonita on my port hand. That was fine up to that. Now I must listen for Fort Point and Lime Point; then I am through the entrance leading into the bay. According to my tide table the tide was strong ebb and I knew that I wasn't making much time against the current but some time had passed and I didn't hear either of the fog signals that I was expecting and time was running out. I opened all the pilothouse windows so I could hear better but no Fort Point or Lime Point.

Where was I or what happened to the signals? I started to worry. I thought that I could see rocks ahead. No it was nothing; I was just dreaming. The next thing I heard the sound of water rushing around rocks or something. Now I was in trouble. I hauled off to port a couple points and stared into the fog. My lookout on the bow sung out "there it is." I looked over to starboard and saw the Fort Point Red Buoy laying over on its side as the seven mile an hour tide rushed against it. I was making very little headway against the strong tide myself and I just hauled off to the center of the channel and continued on into the harbor. Well it was still thick when I passed Alcatraz but I wound up at the gas house all in one piece.

I still don't know why I didn't hear those two fog signals but it would have been hell if I had gone on the wrong side of that Red Buoy.

I remember when

The continuous series of yarns by Capt. McGillivary has been running here for three years now, and he still has a full head of steam in these stories, as you'll see in this one, number TWENTY-THREE:

A Lucky Break

I HAD a 5 am job one morning when I was on the Tug *Sea Wolf* back in the steamtug days in San Francisco. The *Wolf* was lying at the coal dock down at Vallejo Wharf and the Tug *Fearless* was lying just ahead of her. I arrived at my boat a little early and I went aboard to change clothes. I noticed that the *Fearless* was all lighted up and I could hear her fires roaring down below.

After a few minutes her safety valve let go with a bang, which seemed alright, but in another few minutes it let go again and then the third time. By this time I was a little alarmed and I jumped aboard to see what was going on. All the lights were on in the engineroom and I had no trouble getting below. There I saw two fires going full blast under the boiler and the steam gauge was at the popping point.

There was the fireman over one side of the fireroom sitting on a box, fast asleep. I aroused him and he soon came to his senses and cut the fires down in a hurry. He told me that he just sat down to rest while raising steam and that he must have fallen to sleep. The fireroom was pretty hot and it was pretty early in the morning, however if that safety valve wasn't large enough to take care of that extra volume of steam, they may have picked that fireman and me out of a tree somewhere on Telegraph Hill.

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